THE EXPERIENCES OF HIGH-ACHIEVING YOUNG VIOLINISTS FROM A TITLE-I ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

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The Experiences of High-Achieving Young Violinists From a Title-I Elementary School: A Qualitative Study

Researchers have suggested that music ensembles in the United States tend to favor students of higher socioeconomic status (SES). Low SES students are likely to have fewer opportunities for music education, and may not stay in those programs because of their lack of interest (Abril, 2019). Yet, perspectives of low SES and high-achieving music students have been minimally investigated (Baranski, 2011; Boon, 2014). The purpose of this study is to explore perspectives of violin students who come from a Title-I elementary school (Central Strings) and who are now receiving scholarship to attend a major pre-college strings program (Youth Midwest Strings). The research questions explored why students decided to pursue advanced violin learning in a tuition-based program, the benefits of music instruction, and the differences between music programs comprised of students with contrasting SES. Five students, ages 9 to 13, and four of their parents were interviewed. The results indicated that students joined YMS after receiving social and financial support, and they perceived music both as their future profession and as an activity that positively impacts their knowledge and social relationships. Participants also recognized structural, pedagogical, social, and psychological differences between Central Strings and Youth Midwest Strings. Additionally, results suggest that string programs centering on traditional Western classical music repertoire can enable students from Title-I schools to have meaningful engagement with music-related activities and encourage classical music to be a major influence on their lives.

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Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem

Inequality in Music Education

Music ensembles in the United States tend to be over representative of students with certain levels of socioeconomic status (SES), academic achievement, and parental educational attainment, as well as certain races and ethnicities (Elpus & Abril, 2019). While teachers advocate for an equal representation of students in music education programs, in reality, underserved students tend to have fewer opportunities for music education or may be excluded from those programs (Byo & Cassidy, 2005; Costa-Giomi, 2008; DeLorenzo, 2012; Ebie, 1998; Elpus & Abril, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2006, 2012; Hinckley, 1995; Hoffman, 2013; Kinney, 2010; Richerme, 2011; Robinson, 2004). For example, Elpus and Abril (2019) concluded that high school music ensemble students are not a representative subset of the population of high school students in the United States. They found that the majority of students in music ensembles tend to be female, White, native English speakers, from higher SES backgrounds, have higher GPA and standardized test scores, and have parents with higher education degrees. Students with different characteristics, including English language learners, Hispanic, with parents holding a high school diploma or less, and in the lowest SES quartile, were significantly underrepresented in music programs across the United States (Elpus & Abril, 2019). The restriction of access in music education programs, especially for music ensembles, is a problem that affects both society and the learning experiences of a student.

In addition to limited access to music education, research has also shown that schools located in urban areas tend to have high rates of poverty, and their music programs often lack resources and underrepresent minority students (DeLorenzo, 2012; Hoffman, 2013; Hinckley, 1995; Martignetti et al., 2013). According to Hoffman (2013), students of low SES often struggle

to reach passing grades, leading to the requirement of a remediation program. The schedule of those programs often conflicts with instrumental music programs, especially at the elementary school level, which restricts access for students to start instrument instruction. Moreover, those students often have parents with working-wage incomes who may not be able to help students in school activities, which can limit students' participation and their musical instrument practice (Hoffman, 2013). In comparison to suburban areas with high socioeconomic status, students from urban areas are offered a smaller variety of courses, and may exclude arts courses (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2006, 2012; Shaw, 2015). In addition to differences in facilities and schedules, Fitzpatrick (2012) concluded that teachers instructing in urban areas tend to have lower levels of educational attainment, fewer years of teaching experience, and less satisfaction in teaching. Although the limited funding and resources for urban schools can be present in every subject, instrumental music teachers in particular struggle to offer and maintain successful music programs, as evidenced by lower recruitment and retention rates (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Byo & Cassidy, 2005; Doyle 2012; Kinney, 2010).

Although many music teachers struggle with budgeting and financial difficulties, especially for ensembles, researchers advocate that they should reach a broader community of students (Abril & Gault, 2007; Anderson & Denson, 2015; DeLorenzo, 2012; Gurgel, 2015; Hanson, Silver, & Strong, 1991; Martignetti et al., 2013; Richerme, 2011; Robinson, 2004). According to Abril and Gault (2007), despite the declines in instructional time for music, numbers of music teachers, and adequate budgets, as well as an increased focus on standardized tests, educators and administrators still value music education. However, music education is often treated as having less impact on learning, or as less important than other subjects; it is often viewed as only a pleasant diversion instead of as beneficial to the community and part of

meaningful learning. Music educators, therefore, "need to enlist the support of other teachers and administrators to increase the perceived value of music study" (Abril & Gault, 2007, p. 32). If this challenge can be met, then music education can start reaching all communities of students, regardless of their SES and background. Music education also benefits society as a whole (Ebie, 1998; Fitzpatrick, 2006; Gillespie et. al., 2014; Richerme, 2011; Robinson, 2004; Shields, 2001; Shuler, 1991). According to Robinson (2004), music is in every culture, and it is a basic form of communication that expresses feelings and emotions in ways beyond verbal language. In addition, music students have social contact during class; they work on self-expression, increase public speaking abilities, and learn about life values, such as responsibility to an ensemble/team and how to be more productive citizens.

Although music education is recognized among teachers and researchers as having social and learning benefits, research has also shown that some students, especially those underserved and from low SES backgrounds, are not benefiting from music education programs, considering their low enrollment and retention rates (Hartley & Porter, 2009; Kinney, 2010). According to Kinney (2010), higher SES and higher academically achieving students and those from two-parent or two-guardian homes were more likely to begin band instruction, and they were also more likely to persist in those programs.

Since retention and enrollment rates differ according to students' socioeconomic backgrounds, DeLorenzo (2012) asserts that music education presents an issue of social injustice, especially because Black and Latino communities are underrepresented in music ensembles and classes. The term "social justice" refers to a set of ideas that aspires to fairness for all individuals in a society (DeLorenzo, 2012). Researchers argue that music education should grant the same learning opportunities for all students, regardless of where they stand in society (on economical,

racial, gender status, etc.) (Richerme, 2011; Robinson, 2004). However, there are definite examples of social injustice found in the absence of students of color or low SES from music education (DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus & Abril, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2006, 2012). As those studies show, not all children are offered opportunities to enroll in instrumental music education programs. If they are offered, low SES students have lower enrollment rates, since the majority of students enrolled in music programs tend to have higher SES and tend to be less diverse, causing social differences between the whole school population and the music ensemble population (DeLorenzo, 2012; Hoffman, 2013; Robinson, 2004).

Many studies identify the characteristics of underrepresented and underserved students and schools, and they often give suggestions for teaching in those settings (Abril & Gault, 2007; Anderson & Denson, 2015; Byo & Cassidy, 2005; Doyle, 2012; Clements, 2006; Ebie, 1998; Gillespie et al., 2014; Hinckley, 1995; Kinney, 2010; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2006). However, those students' experiences in music programs have rarely been explored in current research.

Problem Statement

Although many articles suggest teaching strategies in underserved settings with great ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity of students (Baranski, 2011; DeLorenzo, 2012; Ebie, 1998; Gillespie et al., 2014; Richerme, 2011), there are few studies that explore the students' perspectives on how music instruction impacts them. Baranski (2011) affirms that there are too few in-depth case studies that explore students' perspectives, which omits insights regarding what music education programs can actually bring to students and communities. Analyzing and understanding students' views about specific music education programs can provide a framework for meeting the needs of a diverse body of students.

In addition to few studies exploring students' perceptions of music education programs, current literature is in need of studies that explore the benefits of music instruction for underserved students. Researchers claimed that further studies on underserved students' perspectives are needed so that music teachers can be aware of students' expectations and needs and adapt instruction accordingly (Ebie, 1998; Costa-Giomi, 2008).

Qualitative studies exploring students' perceptions of music programs that have different SES characteristics are also absent from the current literature. The only studies that make such a comparison (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2006, 2012) examine the characteristics of music programs in urban and suburban areas in a quantitative manner. According to Kelly-McHale (2013), it is crucial for music teachers to be in closer interaction with their students, so that together they can expand their repertoire and curriculum to better serve students' needs and interests.

Purpose of the Study

Through interviews that explore diverse students' experiences with music, it is possible to analyze how students were introduced to instrumental music education, what encouraged them to engage in advanced musical activities, and how they see music benefitting their future learning and life. The purpose of this study is to explore perspectives of four elementary and one middle school violin student who started in a free violin program at a Title-I elementary school, and who are now scholarship recipients and enrolled at a tuition-based advanced music program. Those perspectives were collected through open-ended interview questions regarding why participants chose to pursue advanced violin studies, how they see music as a benefit for their futures, and how their perceptions of the advanced program compared with those of their initial

school experiences. In addition, participants' parents were interviewed in order to triangulate data. This study considered the following research questions:

1) Why did participants pursue advanced violin study after attending group violin classes at a Title-I elementary school?
2) What do participants with backgrounds in a Title-I school consider to be the benefits of advanced violin studies?
3) What do students perceive as key differences between their initial elementary school violin study and their current instruction at a tuition-based advanced music academy?

Delimitations

The purposeful sample of this study was selected from middle and elementary school students who are currently enrolled at a tuition-based advanced music academy, are receiving a scholarship to attend the program, and attended or currently attend a group violin program at a Title-I elementary school.

Definition of Terms

Underrepresented: According to Elpus and Abril (2019), certain groups of students were underrepresented in music programs, such as those of low SES, Hispanic ethnicity, and English language learners. In this study, this term refers to student participants who have backgrounds at Central Elementary, a Title-I school. At Youth Midwest Strings, those student participants are underrepresented because they are the only ones who come from a Title-I school and are on partial and full scholarships based on financial need.

Title-I Schools: According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018), Title-I schools have large concentrations of low-income students, who are enrolled in a free and reduced lunch program. Students of Title-I schools receive supplemental federal funds to assist in meeting their

educational goals.

Low socioeconomic status (SES): According to Fitzpatrick (2006), students of lower SES are usually identified by eligibility for free or reduced lunch (FRL) programs, and schools are considered low SES if they have at least 50% of students receiving FRL. In this study, Central Elementary School will be considered low SES since the school's FRL rate is 84.4%. Besides having backgrounds in a low SES school, students participating in this study presented the need for receiving scholarships to attend Youth Midwest Strings.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This literature review presents studies regarding the characteristics of music ensemble programs in the United States, specifically programs that are located in areas of social inequality, where music access and resources are distributed unevenly. Some studies examined perspectives of teachers and students in urban and low SES areas, where students tend to be underserved by school and community music programs. Other studies presented exemplary models of music programs to identify the general impacts of music education for students.

My search strategies include exploring articles from JSTOR and RILM databases, as well as articles that my mentors and committee members suggested for the current study. In order to find information about music programs that serve a bigger population of low SES students, I used terms such as "low SES music education," "community-based music programs," "urban music education," "low SES music education students perspectives," "low SES music education teachers perspectives," "qualitative study music education community programs," and "Title-I music education programs." Majority of the returns explored music education programs in urban areas and focused on teachers' perspectives. In order to find more studies that may focus on students' perspectives, I searched for qualitative case studies conducted in a variety of music programs, such as community choirs, and after-school string programs. After a careful selection of articles that best fit the purposes of the current study, I organized them into categories. The following topics will be presented: characteristics of music programs in the United States; impacts and benefits of music education programs; studies of exemplary community music programs; teachers' perspectives on music education programs in low SES areas; and students' perspectives on music education programs in low SES areas.

Characteristics of Music Programs in the United States

To provide a context for comparing students and teachers' perspectives on music programs that have large numbers of low SES students, it is necessary to explore general information about the characteristics of music ensemble programs, as well as the students enrolled in music programs in the United States. Elpus and Abril (2019) constructed a demographic profile of high school music ensemble students using national data for the U.S. graduating high school class of 2013. This quantitative study was an extension of the authors' 2011 work, which examined the demographic profile of students involved in high school music ensembles. Using a nationally representative sample of U.S. high school students, Elpus and Abril (2019) analyzed complete high school transcripts to create a demographic profile of students enrolled in specific types of ensembles of U.S. high schools, and they compared the findings to their previous study in order to determine how demographic variables predict enrollment in types of ensembles. For this study, the authors considered: the proportion of U.S high school students enrolled in their school's band, choir, and/or orchestra and enrolled in non-ensemble courses; the demographic characteristics of high school music ensemble students; and the relationship between student demographic characteristics and the likelihood of music ensemble enrollment (p. 4).

In addition to using sample members' high school transcripts, the authors replicated earlier bivariate comparisons of music and nonmusic student characteristics, and extended analysis to a multivariate context. The new context estimates the unique nature of each demographic difference, while controlling for the other characteristics. The sample used in the study had 940 participant high schools (N = 25,210 students) that were randomly sampled from all high schools in the U.S. in 2013. Differently than the previous study, this research used transcript data rather than self-reported responses to identify music ensemble students.

According to the authors, using those transcripts allowed them to analyze results for band, choir, and orchestra students separately, which added a level of precision missing from the earlier study. To make sure that the estimates of this study are nationally representative, the authors set statistical significance at .001 for bivariate analyses on the HSLS data.

The overall enrollment rates and student characteristics showed that 24% of the class of 2013 enrolled in one or more music ensembles during any of their four years of high school (p. 6). Choir was the most popular music ensemble, with 13% of the students enrolled, followed by band, with 11%, and lastly orchestra, with only 2% of students nationally enrolling in at least one orchestra class during high school. In addition to overall enrollment rates, the authors presented bivariate cross-tabulations for "sex, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), highest achieving parents' level of education, family composition, standardized math test scores, and grade earned for eighth-grade math" (pp. 6-8). Parents of student participants also answered two survey questions about participation in out-of-school visual or performing arts activity and if they had attended a play, concert or other live arts event with parents.

Results showed that:

> Students were 60% female and 40% male, and the racial/ethnic composition of music ensemble students was 58% White, 13% Black or African American, 17% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Asian or Pacific Islander, 8% two or more races, and under 1% American Indian or Alaska Native. (p. 1)

The majority of students from the class of 2013 participating in high school ensembles were from the highest socioeconomic status quintiles. Fully 61% of music ensemble students participated in out-of-school arts activity and 71% attended a play, concert, or live show with their parents. The study also examined the probability of a student enrolling in a music ensemble

at some point during high school based on students' SES, gender, race/ethnicity, academic achievement, and being a native English speaker. The greatest differences between probabilities were in SES (low SES = .20 and high SES = .34), math scores (lowest = .16 and highest = .39), and native English speakers (.26 and native speakers of other languages = .20). Those results are relevant to my research topic as I explore differences between music education in settings of lower and higher SES.

Exploring the main characteristics of music education in schools of lower SES and schools of contrasting SES allows music educators to analyze the issues of unequal representation of students in music programs. Costa-Giomi (2008) assessed the status of music education in the elementary schools of a large urban center in Texas. The author investigated possible inequalities in access to music education resources based on the race and SES characteristics of the student population. This quantitative study sampled 54 elementary school teachers from the largest and most diverse urban school districts in Texas who were sent a questionnaire to provide information about their music programs. Based on the proportion of minority and economically disadvantaged students in each school, schools were classified based on their economic status as: low minority representation (MR), medium MR, and high MR. Data included teachers' backgrounds and demographics, the music programs' characteristics, and teachers' perceptions about characteristics of the school.

Costa-Giomi (2008) found a significant difference ($p = .08$) in parental support, where more than 70% of parents of high SES parents showed interest in students' activities, while fewer parents of low SES participated in fundraising activities. There was also a significant difference between the facilities of schools ($p = .08$), with nearly 60% of facilities described as inadequate in low and medium MR schools. Low SES schools also reported having twice as

many students with disabilities as higher SES schools. In general, all topics covered in the questionnaire favored schools of higher SES. The study did not present values for reliability and validity, and the number of participants was restricted to one state in the United States. The study, however, is relevant for my research, considering that it discusses the differences between high and low SES schools and asserts the need to study inequalities and student access within music programs. The analysis of those inequalities can lead to further suggestions for music teachers in low SES areas and the issues that they commonly face. I plan to elaborate on those suggestions based on what students claim to be the benefits of music education.

Another study that reported differences between low to high SES schools was conducted by Fitzpatrick (2012). The purpose of her study was to compare characteristics and perceptions of 20 teachers of urban and suburban secondary instrumental music courses from ninth through twelfth grades in the Chicago area. Fitzpatrick was interested in exploring the demographic characteristics of music teachers from both urban and suburban areas as well as in exploring how those characteristics are compared to the variables examined. Music teachers of urban and suburban areas of Chicago responded a survey that contained Likert-type and essay questions regarding their demographics, level of experience, comfort in teaching, job satisfaction, challenges they faced, and the impact of their teaching on individual students and their communities. Fitzpatrick recognized a limitation of her study: a low response rate, where only 6 urban teachers and 14 suburban teachers answered the survey. No values for reliability or validity of the survey were reported.

According to Fitzpatrick's (2012) demographic results, 43% of suburban teachers had at least a master's degree. Urban teachers were more diverse in terms of race; while 93% of

suburban teachers were White and 7% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 50% of urban teachers were White, 33% Black, and 17% Latino. Results of this survey ($p < .05$) showed that urban teachers:

> Scored significantly lower regarding their job satisfaction, had significant lower levels of educational attainment, indicated less satisfaction with their decision to teach in the urban context, indicated that the number of students taught was less manageable, indicated that their careers were less personally rewarding, felt that they had less parental support, perceived less value from professional development opportunities, and indicated that they spent more time on discipline than their suburban counterparts. (p. 61)

The author suggested the need for further comparisons between low and high SES schools with a bigger sample and other school districts. Although the study did not have a large number of participants, it supported the view that teachers from low SES schools see a negative difference in the level of music education and facilities provided to students.

In a previous study, Fitzpatrick (2006) compared the SES of students to their scores on a standardized proficiency test (Ohio Proficiency Test). Those scores were analyzed to determine if there were differences in test scores and SES levels between students participating or not participating in an instrumental music program. Although a standardized test was used for this study, no values of reliability and validity of the test were reported. Students in grades 9 through 12 in the Columbus Public Schools during the 2003-2004 school year ($N = 15,431$) were sampled, and 915 of them were part of an instrumental music course. Results ($p < .05$) showed four grouping variables related to the scores of each subject (citizenship, science, math and reading) from 4th, 6th, and 9th grade students: full-price (higher SES) and instrumental students, full-price and non-instrumental students, free/reduced lunch (lower SES) and instrumental students, and free/reduced lunch and non-instrumental students. Full-price instrumental music

students performed at the highest level of any group for each subject, at every grade level, and across SES lines, while free/reduced lunch non-instrumental music students performed at the lowest level of any group for each subject, at every grade level, and across SES lines.

Fitzpatrick (2006) indicated, however, that the two other groups were not as consistent. Free/reduced lunch and instrumental students at the 9th grade level showed higher scores in all subjects when compared to full price and non-instrumental students. Fitzpatrick also pointed out that many band students do not start instrumental music activities until 5th grade, in contrast to string students, who may start in earlier grades. Because of that, and because of the differences in different SES sample sizes, the results should be interpreted cautiously. Nevertheless, the results suggest that participation in instrumental music programs is related to higher achievement scores from the outset of instruction.

In this section, I presented research addressing the characteristics of music ensemble programs in the United States, with a focus on programs serving high percentages of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Elpus and Abril (2019) concluded that certain students were underrepresented in high school band, choir, and orchestra programs across the US, especially those whose primary language is not English, students of color, and those in the lowest SES quartile. The authors concluded that such students are underrepresented, and future research would benefit from looking at differences between high SES and low SES schools. Studies that made this comparison were conducted by Costa-Giomi (2008) and Fitzpatrick (2006, 2012). Those studies found that urban schools typically have lower SES, serve more students of diverse ethnicities, fewer facilities, and less support from school administration; conversely, higher SES schools generally have more student participation in music programs and more robust music programs. I plan to expand on those studies in order to find out music students'

perspectives about their participation in contrasting music ensemble programs: Central Strings, located in a Title-I elementary school, and Youth Midwest Strings, a tuition-based advanced instrumental program. I also plan on analyzing students' perceived differences between programs with higher and lower SES characteristics.

Impacts and Benefits of Music Education Programs

Although studies show that music education programs in areas of social inequality and low SES are deprived of adequate resources, researchers recognize the benefits of music education for all students. While Fitzpatrick's (2006) study suggested that students participating in instrumental music outperformed in standardized tests when compared to scores of students who did not participate in musical activities, other studies have found that music students were not as successful in other subjects as non-music students. Ebie (1998), in a qualitative study, explored how underrepresented students succeeded in music education courses, even though they remained unsuccessful in other academic courses. He explored how music education plays a role in the lives of what he termed "at-risk" students, including preventative factors that might result from participation in music-making activities. Two music teachers were interviewed with regard to their experiences with students who were successful in music, but not in other classes. The purpose of the interviews was explore what influences students to have high achievement in music and not in other subjects, as well as implications and discussion about how to use music instruction to benefit and positively impact the lives of "at-risk" students. Two public school teachers were interviewed during a five-week period and questions regarding specific students who were successful in the music class but not in other classes were asked, as well as questions investigating the reason for this phenomenon and how music can impact students.

Results of the analysis of the participant interviews revealed that:

> 1) Music is an important factor in the lives of "at-risk" and other children; 2) Participation in the musical ensemble appears to provide students with feelings of personal accomplishment; 3) Participation in a music ensemble can provide students with leadership roles and give them feelings of responsibility; 4) Music itself seems to be a salient factor in improving the lives of "at-risk" students; and 5) The extent to which the music teacher becomes involved in the life of the music students seems to be a factor in their success. (pp. 74-75)

Although Ebie's (1998) study represents the teachers' perspectives on the benefits of music programs for "at-risk" students, there are certain limitations that may be considered for the current study. The study is dated and its features suggest that students are "at-risk," which can be considered a deficit-laden language, where students are not capable of succeeding because of the challenges they face outside of school. It is also important to notice that the five-week data generation period is brief, and may not portray accurate assumptions of benefits of music education for students. Even though there are limitations to the study, Ebie (1998) claims that further studies on students' perspectives are also needed. That way, music teachers can be aware of the students' expectations and perspectives and adapt instruction according to them.

Like Ebie, Gillespie et al. (2014) found positive changes in public schools when they were introduced to music instruction. The purpose of their study was to examine the impact of newly initiated string programs on schools, communities, teachers and students. Researchers were interested in knowing demographic information of new string programs, in terms of location, student access, and instructional offerings. A questionnaire containing Likert-type and short-response questions was developed. A pilot study was conducted to improve reliability and validity of the measure. As a result, it showed a high coefficient of .87 on internal consistency,

which implies that the questionnaire was clear and intelligible. String educators who initiated a new string program between 1999 and 2009 ($N = 64$) responded to questionnaires.

Demographic results (Gillespie et al., 2014) of the new string programs showed that the majority of the programs were suburban (59%), while others were urban (23%) or rural (18%). Most new string program instruction occurred in middle schools and high schools, and the majority of programs (41%) occurred in a classroom devoted exclusively to string classes, while a third (33%) occurred in a space shared with bands, and the remaining 26% shared a classroom with an academic teacher, taught in auditorium stage/cafeteria, or closet storage areas.

Regarding teacher demographics, the vast majority of teachers were string specialists (91%), 86% were credentialed, and most had taught for at least five years (90%). The majority of teachers taught at the middle school level (52%), 28% in the elementary school level and 20% in the high school level. Regarding string program impact, results were divided in subscales of program benefits: student benefits and negative outcomes. The medians of negative outcomes were considerably lower than the other subscales; for instance, teachers found difficulties in scheduling and a lack of performance facilities ($M = 3.31$ [on a scale from 1 to 10]). On the other hand, participants identified several benefits of the new programs, including increased student participation in all music programs ($M = 4.63$), more student collaborative opportunities ($M = 4.63$), increased community and local music business support ($M = 3.83$), and a more comprehensive music curriculum ($M = 4.42$).

Gillespie et al. (2014) suggested that while there are benefits in terms of enrollment and overall educational experience, it is difficult to generalize these data, considering the small size of the sample. However, they concluded that education budget cuts and the unsupported school expenditures for music program and practices can have an effect on students' enrollment and

retention rates. While schools might present different financial scenarios for music programs, the authors suggest that, "music educators create efficient and meaningful programs that serve students, while also developing greater awareness in the local community and with administrators" (p. 186).

This section summarized research about the benefits of music education programs in schools. Ebie (1998) looked at benefits of music education for students in low SES conditions though interviews with teachers, and Gillespie et al. (2014) examined the benefits of new string programs, and concluded that increased levels of student retention and enrollment, as well as feelings of personal accomplishment, leadership roles, responsibility, and connection with peers and teachers were found in music classes. In my study, I plan to analyze the benefits of instrumental instruction through students' perspectives. Acknowledging the benefits of music education allows teachers and music supporters to encourage and create programs that serve a wide range of students.

Studies of Exemplary Community Music Programs

Since community instrumental music programs bring benefits to students, including those in low SES areas, it is important to explore successful programs that serve a variety of students' communities and analyze their benefits. Oare (2008) explored the value of the Chelsea House Orchestra, an authentic Celtic music string ensemble in a suburban area of Chelsea, Michigan, and an extracurricular activity of a high school music program. His research used a qualitative case study design to explore practical issues with the development of this unusual ensemble, to analyze how this case can serve as a model for similar groups in other schools, as well as to develop the concept of democratic music education. According to Oare, the concept of democratic music education led to the research question: "How does the teaching of music in this

context [through authentic Celtic music] influence the incorporation of principles of democratic education within the music ensemble?" (p. 65)

Oare (2008) affirmed that students need opportunities to make and listen to several different styles of music in order to create their own music and to understand how music has a variety of musical style-practices. By understanding the music of others, students then gain self-understanding of their own musical values. This understanding is then developed through the exercise of creating and decision making, which are important factors of democratic musical learning. Oare explained that musical democracy consists of students who exercise the right to participate in music decisions through cooperative learning by forming, questioning, creating, and developing ideas and musical products.

In order to analyze the aspects of democratic education in the case of Chelsea House Orchestra, Oare conducted interviews with four students of the program (two seniors and two juniors) and one teacher. Questions regarding how the ensemble reflected what is considered foundational aspects of democratic education were asked and they were divided in four topics: 1) development of a community of learners; 2) collaborative student empowerment; 3) creative freedom; and 4) musical enjoyment. Results showed shared perspectives on the program, including the enjoyment of social activities. Students reported that they arrived early to socialize, they felt encouraged to take risks, they enjoyed the creation of a community of learners, and they had a sense of ownership. Because students' activities involved making arrangements in small groups, the author suggested that the ensemble fostered creativity through mutual interaction, rather than structured activities. Lastly, Oare reported that students expressed experiencing deep enjoyment from playing music together with other people.

Another qualitative case study that is useful to my study was done by Langston and Barrett (2008), who explored the concept of social capital and community music of the Milton Community Choir. The ensemble consists of students age 16 and older and is located in an industrial center of Tasmania. Langston and Barrett (2008) defined social capital as "a contributor to economic well-being, a community resource, and, a contributor to a civil society," which "facilitates interactions between people for mutual benefit" (pp. 92-93). Social capital is explored through their analysis of participation in community groups, such as choirs and instrumental music ensembles. Langston and Barrett (2008) described the outcomes of involvement in community music practices, which included community involvement in a social and/or political manner, the development of shared knowledge, identity, community, personal growth, bonding, trust, tolerance of diversity, sense of community, ownership, and other factors. Those benefits were linked to the Milton Community Choir, a program with strong emphasis on the production of community music and social capital. Langston and Barrett (2008) used qualitative methods to interview 27 participants, and a particular case (the Milton Community Choir). The data collected was developed in four themes that discussed the relation to the indicators of social capital. Although the authors' ultimate goal was to explore the production of social capital, their study is relevant for my research because it explains the benefits of community music programs. I am interested in examining these benefits as they relate to extracurricular string programs in the lives of underserved students.

Using narrative analytic procedures, Langston and Barrett (2008) interpreted the lived experiences of individuals. Their interview questions were divided in seven parts:

> 1) Greeting and introduction; 2) Demographics: a general description of choir members' backgrounds in musical activities, education and community; 3) The community choir as

> an entity: a description of choir members' perspectives on their participation in the choir; 4) Choir members: a description of choir members' roles as a participant of the choir; 5) Interpersonal relationships: a description of choir members' community engagement inside and outside choir; 6) Motivation: what motivates choir members' to participate in the community choir; and 7) The community: a description of the local community generally and musically. (Langston & Barrett, 2008, pp. 346-347)

The authors' findings suggest that the Milton Community Choir manifests many indicators previously identified in the literature. For instance, members of the choir indicated strong networks with other members and shared norms and values. Members also indicated willingness to trust each other, involvement in civic (accepting that leaders have strong knowledge) and community activities (cooperation between individuals and with other groups), and a strong sense of caring for and valuing others. Lastly, Langston and Barrett defined the Milton Community Choir as a vehicle for personal development and for the development of self-esteem, where members valued the opportunity to learn about the music rehearsed and equally valued the opportunity to learn solo parts.

Another study that explored the benefits of a community music program was conducted by Baranski (2011). The purpose of his study was to explore the experiences of participants of the Neighborhood Music School (NMS), a community arts school in a suburban community of Connecticut, and to understand what draws community members to the program. The study was guided by three research questions: "What motivates people to participate in community music programs at the NMS? What keeps them engaged in community music programs at the NMS? And what meaning does NMS have in the lives of the participants?" (p. 5). Those research

questions are similar to the research questions of my study, which also explore students' interests, musical engagement, and the perceived benefits of music education.

The methodology Baranski (2011) used was a qualitative case study, where he conducted in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to understand the lived experiences of 30 participants who chose to study at the NMS. In response to what motivates people to participate in community programs at the NMS, Baranski found that students decided to participate in this institution because they were intrinsically motivated to perform music. Students enrolled at the school because they wanted to experience further levels of music instruction that complemented what they have in public school, or because they were lacking those kinds of programs in school. Students also attended classes to receive social rewards and benefits associated with learning and creating in a supportive environment. In response to students' engagement in community music programs at the NMS, Baranski found that instructors played a big role in building confidence, creating a sense of ownership (such as having students decide their own repertoire), and preparing them to perform. Besides providing adequate instruction and achieving mutual respect between students and teachers, students revealed that they were motivated to practice and perform when they were not required to do so. Although Baranski recognized the benefits of community music, he stated that there are few in-depth case studies, which is problematic considering that there is little information about why people participate in community programs or what keeps them engaged in them.

Baranski (2011) concluded that community music programs provide opportunities for children to experience music making in various ways, including performing, creating, and improvising. Those programs emphasize lifelong learning and access for all, accommodating people of different ages, cultures, ability levels, SES and/or political and religious beliefs.

Baranski's research questions and methodology will be adapted to fit my case study of students with backgrounds at a Title-I school who are currently studying at a tuition-based and advanced music program.

Another study exploring students' perspectives on a violin school program is conducted by Boon (2014), who explored the violin experiences of African American elementary students in a school located in northern Florida to consider the potential for culturally-responsive string education. The author used a qualitative method in a hermeneutical approach, exploring and analyzing social contexts and historical backgrounds of participants (p. 137). The author also adopted a theoretical framework of a culturally responsive pedagogy, basing her goals in Abrahams' (2005) theory, which encourages teachers to remain alert to the needs of students by reflecting and acting in a changing world (p. 136). This framework not only explored students' musical cultures and backgrounds, values and desires, but also questioned sources of power, in which the author cites Freire's (1970) process of "Conscientization." As a result, Boon (2014) advocates for music education that addresses a variety of students' backgrounds (p. 137).

The participants in this study were selected from a purposive sampling method based on their knowledge with violin within their school program. The students ($N = 10$) were fourth and fifth graders who chose to study violin as their "major." The students participated in a semi-structured interview that was used to understand their violin experiences. In this study, the following research questions were considered:

> 1) What are the personal music worlds of these African American Children? 2) How do these children perceive the violin program at school? 3) How do the individual perceptions of the violin program and the sociocultural musical backgrounds of these students relate? (Boon, 2014, p. 135)

The researcher stated common responses on the interviews conducted with those students. For all students, their favorite music genres included rap, hip hop, and R & B. The meaning of those genres for them was music that makes people "shake their booties" and is "interesting for everyone," (p. 139) since the use of the words rhyme, tell a story, have "different kinds of songs [within it]," and follow a beat (p. 139). Regarding musical attributes, students liked those genres because they have a fast beat, and also because the lyrics rhyme and contain messages that black communities tell in an explicit language, with cuss words, talk about guns, sex, etc. (p. 140). For instance, a student told the researcher about a song that talks about smoking: "You shouldn't really do all that stuff;" as well a song about "four girls and they had run away from home because their moms and people dying and all that other stuff" (p. 140).

In addition, Boon (2014) affirmed that students had musical ownership to the music they are exposed to at home (rap, hip hop, and R & B) and provided entertainment in their routines. Students saw those musical genres as the music Black communities created and claim that R & B stands for "Rap for Black" (p. 141). The participants of the study also claimed not liking or listening to "white music," such as classical, jazz, and rock genres. They also believed "white people act black," listen to black music, and even take credit for music they did not write (p. 141). Because of this, students claimed to try distancing their music from others (p. 141). Participants were also exposed to gospel music in church, where music was "for fun, especially when shared with others" (p. 142).

In violin classes, Boon (2014) stated that students felt motivated to choose violin as their "major" because it made them interested and attentive in a way they never seen before (p. 142). A student claimed that "it was the first time I ever been interested that much in my life," and "when you play and get something right, you get excited about it because you never did it

before" (p. 142). In class, students explored rhythm options to music they already played, applying them to rap, steps, R & B, and other musical genres with which the students feel connected. According to the researcher, "Playing violin opens unfamiliar territories for [students]. . . . Not only they receive the opportunity to play music on their violins, but also using their instruments to generate a beat" (p. 144), which is what "good music" is in the students' perspective.

Boon's study (2014) explored students' rich musical experiences outside of the classroom, which positively affected their perceptions of violin learning at school. The author concludes the article suggesting that:

> Teachers must find ways to put that rich multiplicity to work in the classroom. They can do so by establishing a dialogic and democratic teaching-learning environment, where they attempt to engage and build upon the musical knowledge that students already bring to the classroom. Culturally-responsive teaching is a way to do that and to empower these students. (p. 144)

In addition, the author suggests that the use of non-traditional methods, such as teaching through rap, electronic keyboards, and establishing links to the community, as well as bringing larger social, cultural, and historical contexts into class discussions (p. 145). The intent of this case study was not to generalize to a broader population of Black students, and this summary is not intended to imply that Black students in general interpret these genres similarly. However, the perceptions of these specific individuals can inform educators by reaching a more diverse community of students without excluding certain students' experiences and interests.

In contrast to Boon, Kelly-McHale (2013) examined issues of delivering Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) to elementary school music students. The author developed a

qualitative study to analyze how an elementary general music teacher's curricular beliefs and practices influence music identity and identity in music for second-generation students. Through interviews with a music teacher who followed the Orff curriculum and four students whose families had immigrated from Mexico, the author examined issues in delivering CRP for those students, which resulted in an "isolated musical experience that did not support the integration of cultural, linguistic, and popular music experiences" (p. 195). According to the author, teachers are unaware of the diversity within student populations and of the need to integrate culturally responsive music instruction. The author described a case of a music teacher trying to incorporate multicultural perspectives into her music curriculum, with the intention of making connections to students' home culture and music education experiences. Although the teacher presented good intentions to deliver CRP, when interviewing students about their perspectives on their music class, the author found a disconnect between the content and students' engagement in class.

Kelly-McHale (2013) used the frameworks of identity in music (IIM) and music in identity (MII) to describe students' musical experiences and development of identity in their music class. IIM is described as "the conceptualization of self-based on the cultural or social roles applied in music" (Kelly-McHale, 2013, p. 198). For example, if students consider themselves violinists who like to play Bach and listen to Baroque music, then that would be their IIM. In contrast, MII is "the result of the process of using music to develop identity" (Kelly-McHale, 2013, p. 199). For example, if students consider themselves good violinists who perform for school concerts, then that would be their MII. After conducting the interviews, the author concluded that music students' IIM and MII are not congruent with their teachers' goals and objectives of music instruction. The author suggests that teachers should be "students of

[their] students; [they] must become teachers who learn" (Kelly-McHale, 2013, p. 212). If teachers are in closer interaction with students, then students can have a strong impact on what teachers can bring them in the classroom, and therefore, better expand their repertoire and curriculum and better serve students' needs and interests.

In this section, I explored five qualitative studies that provide examples of how successful music education programs can positively affect students, particularly in low SES areas. The qualitative case studies of Oare (2008), Langston and Barrett (2008), and Baranski (2011) explored the benefit of music for students enrolled in a variety of community programs. The results of those studies suggest that students enjoy the social activities of music programs, have deep enjoyment from playing music with other people (Oare, 2008), develop knowledge, identity, sense of community and ownership (Langston & Barrett, 2008), and experience music making in various ways, which result in a lifelong learning (Baranski, 2011). In addition to exploring specific community programs, the five articles suggest future methodological and directions for future research implications, which will be taken in consideration in my study. For instance, Baranski (2011) affirms that there is a need for case studies that explore students' perceptions. The methodologies and future research implications of those four studies will be borrowed and adapted to best fit the purpose and research questions of my study.

This section also examined two qualitative case studies of community programs that adopt Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) strategies. Boon (2014) suggests that non-traditional methods, such as teaching through students' musical interests and backgrounds (e.g. hip hop), might encourage communities to be engaged with music. On the other hand, Kelly-McHale (2013) suggests that there are issues with music teachers delivering CRP, where they do not closely interact with students and their backgrounds, and students do not perceive musical

activities as engaging or important. While those two studies find contradictory results about CRP, I plan on adapting their methodologies to find if there are differences on teaching strategies between the programs explored in my study. I also plan on expanding the findings into future research or future teaching implications. All articles in this section are aligned with the premises of my study, since they explore students' perspectives. I plan on finding students perspectives on two string programs: Youth Midwest Strings, where students have higher SES; and Central Strings, where students have lower SES.

Teachers' Perspectives on Music Education Programs in Low SES Areas

Music educators who teach in low SES or urban areas often have different perceptions than those teaching in suburban or higher SES areas. Doyle (2012) examined perceptions of elementary music teachers in urban areas. The purpose of the quantitative study was to collect data representing urban music education, including the relationships among teacher-student demographic differences, teacher preparation, administrative support, and teacher expectations and attitudes toward teaching students in urban schools. Title-I schools ($N = 221$) from the Southeastern United States were sent a survey (the "Doyle survey," created by the writer) to provide demographic information, and 71 music teachers from those schools responded. The survey had multiple choice, Likert, and open-ended questions that asked about the teacher's background prior to teaching in the school, how much their administration influenced students' learning, how much their ideas were valued, how much the students' background influenced their music learning, students' expectations, and other questions. Measures of reliability showed a Cronbach's Alpha of .91, which is considered a high coefficient. Correlations between different variables were computed and dependent variables were examined in relation to the teacher's

attitudes about urban elementary music teaching and their expectations of students in urban areas.

Results of Doyle's (2012) study indicated that most of the teacher's demographics and backgrounds were different from their students ($p < .05$). Most of the teachers who responded to the survey were Caucasian (53%), from suburban areas (52%), from a two-parent household (80%), and were members of the middle class or higher (94%). On the other hand, the student body consisted of more groups of ethnic minorities. Over half of the schools had more than 80% ($N = 45$) of either African American or Hispanic student concentrations. Those schools also reported the most ethnic segregation within social interactions between students. Regarding teacher preparation, most of the teachers (79%) reported not having urban-related coursework as part of their certification. More than half of the teachers (59%) felt unprepared to teach in urban schools.

Doyle's (2012) results suggest that elementary teachers in urban areas have a larger number of minority students and more ethnic segregation of the student population. She also affirms that teachers' demographics do not match students' backgrounds, making it more challenging for teachers to connect to students, understand their realities, or relate to their daily lives or customs. This can lead to different classroom expectations. For example, while teachers expect that students learn basic musicianship skills, such as learning note names, singing, and writing Western classical music, students might be expecting that they can learn basic musicianship skills by using repertoire and literature of their own cultures, which may be unrelated to the teacher's background. Because of this, it is crucial that students' expectations of music education programs be explored, so teachers can consider relevant learning experiences.

Similar to Doyle (2012), Shaw (2015) explored perspectives of urban music teachers. Following the methodology of a case study, the author used individual and group interviews to explore perspectives of four successful urban choral educators who use culturally responsive teaching (CRT), a "pedagogical approach that seeks to make classroom instruction more consistent with the cultural orientations of ethnically diverse students" (p. 200). Those teachers are part of an urban community children's chorus defined as a "multi-racial, multi-cultural choral music education organization," and whose mission statement is: "Combining high artistic standards with a social purpose" (p. 203).

Shaw (2015) categorized the findings into three main themes: how urban choral educators used knowledge of learners, knowledge of context, and personal practical knowledge (PPK – a person-centered perspective for school practices). Those themes were combined with the premises of CRT, which is a child-centered approach that places students' strengths and need at the center of curriculum. The author explained that teachers' success may be determined by the use of contextual understandings with students. She suggested that effective teachers explore the dynamic cultures in their classroom and in students' local communities. The results of the study exemplified how teachers' responsibilities, such as selecting repertoire, programming concerts, engaging performances with audiences, designing instruction, and recruiting and retaining students, can be informed by the knowledge of the community of learners and educational context. Shaw (2015) noted that CRT is underresearched in music education, and suggested the need for more studies exploring students' perceptions of CRT. The author also expressed the need for research identifying successful models that can inform and equip music teachers to understand and undertake the challenges of urban public school teaching. Although Shaw's (2015) study explores CRT approaches in music programs, which is not applicable to my study, I

plan on adapting her study to explore students' perceptions of programs with contrasting levels of SES, which may inform how teachers respond to students' interests and needs.

Similarly to Shaw's (2015) study, Clements (2006) examined the success factors of a Youth Orchestra community program that provided string training for underrepresented students. In her qualitative study, four members of the Metropolitan Community Program (MCP), an outreach training program for youth of traditionally underrepresented ethnicities starting at the first and second grade, were interviewed. After a couple of years of music instruction, students from the MCP may audition competitively for entrance into a prestigious orchestra program: the Greater Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestra (GMYSO), where they have chances to perform side-by-side with professional musicians. Clements (2006) calculated the percentage of minority students from MCP that have entered GMYSO since MCP was founded, which has increased over the years. The study also conducted personal interviews and analyzed relevant literature and program documents to identify the success factors of MCP. Interviewees were the Artistic Director/Conductor, Manager, and Director of Development. Data were categorized into five main areas: 1) foundation and mission; 2) personnel and responsibilities; 3) access and marketing; 4) sponsorship; and 5) retrospective and future strategies. Results showed that key success factors in this program were: 1) parental involvement; 2) a high standard of excellence; 3) community building within the program; and 4) the association with a well-established youth orchestra. The author suggested a replication of this model elsewhere. Clements' study is relevant for my study because MCP's success factors may be related to those in the tuition-based program at which I am conducting my research. By exploring participants' perspectives about those success factors, I hope to explore what students perceive the benefits of music instruction are for their future.

Similarly to Clements' study, Madura Ward-Steinman (2006) found benefits of an after-school music partnership. Through an independent music outreach program, a private urban university's music education department sent 14 students to teach children in the neighborhood. In the first year of the program, 125 students from first through fifth grades (6-12 years of age) participated; these students were 55% Hispanic and 45% African-American. The goals of the program involved "helping at-risk children develop their talents, self-esteem, leadership skills, and aspirations for life" (p. 115). In addition, student teachers of the program were responsible to work with a university professor to design goals and implement the program. Student teachers were expected to present research-based effective teaching strategies, which included "positive and flexible teacher attitudes; interesting, challenging, and extraordinary musical activities; and allowance for children to blow off steam, have snacks, play with friends, and build relationships with caring and competent adults" (p. 117). Teachers developed a nine-week curriculum, where most of the classes were general music classes, with exceptions of recorder and chorus classes.

Madura Ward-Steinman (2006) asked children short questions about their favorite songs before and after the nine-week program. Before music instruction, children ($N = 80$) reported mostly famous pop singers (such as Nelly and Britney Spears). After music instruction, most of the students answered the same questions with songs they performed through the program, such as "Changamano" and "Oye la Musica." Madura also asked university student teachers to rate their individual teaching success with a Likert-type scale. Regarding musical goals, teachers reported that they were inadequate in their teaching of composition and improvisation. On the other hand, teachers felt adequate regarding the teaching goals of outreach programs, including acting as a positive force and making the experience "interesting, extraordinaire and enjoyable" (p. 119). Madura Ward-Steinman claims that many of the musical goals were inadequately

achieved due to the short duration of the program, as well as the inexperience of the student teachers working to create curricula.

Madura Ward-Steinman (2006), however, stated that "evidence of their [teachers'] success in this area [successful after-school programs for 'at-risk' children] was the children's consistent attendance through the program. . . . Student teachers played a vital role in motivating students to return each week" (pp. 119-120). Madura Ward-Steinman also collected teachers' insights and realizations about teaching after the nine-week program. Those included an overall increase of "collaborative effort for all involved, and flexibility was the key" (p. 120). Madura Ward-Steinman concluded that this music partnership was successful due to the commitment of all adults involved, including student teachers, university teachers, school teachers, parents, and the outreach director. Madura Ward-Steinman's study is related to my current study as it explores the benefits of music instruction for students who come from a Title-I background. I plan to adapt her methodology to find out students' perspectives regarding benefits of music education, as opposed to teachers' perspectives.

In this section, I examined four studies regarding teachers' perspectives on music education programs in low SES areas. While Doyle (2012) found that teachers from urban areas showed strong dedication to and reward for teaching music, they also clearly stated problems faced in their profession, such as a lack of parental involvement from students, lack of respect in class, students in poverty line, and administrators unwilling to help students. Similarly, Shaw (2015) explored perspectives of urban teachers and suggested that a contextual understanding of students' cultures may contribute to their success. Her findings suggest that teachers' responsibilities such as selecting repertoire, programing concerts, and engaging with students, can be defined by the knowledge of the community of learners and educational context.

Doyle's (2012) and Shaw's (2015) studies contrast with Clements' (2006) and Madura Ward-Steinman's (2006) examinations of success factors that had impacted teachers of music outreach programs. All studies in this section explored teachers' perspectives about school facilities, and their expectations for students in urban schools. It is difficult, however, to compare those programs, considering that the expectations and settings from each program differed, and there are different methodological approaches that studies adopted. However, the information from those studies is helpful in understanding teachers' perspectives on urban settings, which tend to have a higher number of low SES students than in suburban schools; my study will identify students' perspectives on two music programs, one with high and another with low SES characteristics, and analyze its benefits for their learning and future.

Students' Perspectives on Music Education Programs in Low SES Areas

In addition to exploring music teachers' perspectives and how to positively impact low SES students, it is important to explore what students hope to achieve in a music class, or what factors of music instruction they perceive as effective for a positive learning experience. Shields (2001) explored the importance of music education as agency for underrepresented urban adolescents through participation in performance groups while receiving instruction from the music teacher, beyond their normal general music classes. The qualitative study focused on examining: 1) students' self-perceptions of their musical competence and its relationship to their self-perception of their judgment of one's worth as a person; 2) the role and importance of participation in musical performance groups with mentoring and its contribution to their sense of social support; and 3) the opinions and attitudes of students and parents regarding their school experiences, as well as the importance of music in their lives and the impact of music instruction and its application to practical issues and students' lives (pp. 274-275).

The mixed methods study (Shields, 2001) consisted of interviews and pretests and posttests given to 150 sixth graders in a music class during the second semester of a school for the arts located in a large urban district. From the initial sample ($N = 150$), students were considered "at-risk" based on their academic category, followed by social skills adjustment and behavior, school setting, home and family, and physical and mental health. Parents ($n = 32$) also participated in the study, the majority of whom were White. Students received the intervention over a period of 16 weeks, during which they participated in a creative percussion ensemble ($n =$ 10 "at-risk" and $n = 8$ "non-at-risk" students), choir ($n = 28$ "at-risk" and $n = 29$ "non-at-risk" students), or both ($n = 2$ "at-risk" students). Throughout this period, the music teacher acted as a mentor and made efforts to engage with students' problems and needs, both musical and non-musical.

Results of the study (Shields, 2001) indicated that the measures that significantly increased from pretest to posttest were self-perception of musical competence (pretest: $M = 3.12$, $SD = .64$; and posttest: $M = 3.30$, $SD = .57$) and social acceptance (pretest: $M = 2.70$, $SD = .76$ and posttest: $M = 2.87$, $SD = .77$). The number of students who ranked music as important increased from 76% on the pretest to 82% on the posttest. Interviews indicated that students and parents valued their musical experiences, and that music ensemble participation brought emotions of pleasure, happiness, and pride as well as provided a vehicle for self-expression and a source of positive motivation. Parents also indicated that teacher support and awareness of students' lives and issues are crucial for improvement of students' motivation. Students and parents also indicated that "the lack of money was a limiting factor in the amount, type, and quality of musical participation available to participants" (p. 282).

Although no measures of reliability or validity were provided in Shields' (2001) study, it is one of the only studies that explored in depth the perceptions of students who have traditionally been underrepresented within school programs. Hearing students' perceptions is a critical step for teachers to adapt instruction and make learning more meaningful and applicable for future life skills. As other studies in this chapter suggest that low SES students might not have financial means for attending a music program, it is important for music teachers to understand students' perspectives and needs. My study will focus on exploring students' perspectives on a Title-I and a tuition-based advanced violin program, including why they decided to pursue advanced violin studies, what the differences are between the programs, and how they perceive that music instruction will benefit their futures.

Summary

This review of literature presents five topics related to music education programs in areas of low SES, as well as successful models of music education programs. The first topic revealed general characteristics of music education programs and comparisons of low to high SES schools. It concluded that some students' groups are underrepresented in music education programs, especially those of lower SES, students of color, and students in at-risk of failing conditions (Elpus & Abril, 2019). Regarding comparisons of low to high SES schools, the topic concludes that, in general, urban schools often serve neighborhoods with high concentrations of low SES students, and have a larger number of students, fewer facilities, more ethnic segregation, and less support from parents and community (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2006, 2012).

Although there is an imbalance in the quality of music education between urban and suburban schools, music education brings benefits to all students, which is the second topic of

this literature review. Benefits of music education include increasing feelings of personal accomplishment, leadership roles, responsibility, and connection with peers and teachers (Ebie, 1998; Gillespie et al., 2014). It is important to acknowledge the benefits of music education for a wide range of students, and to increase awareness of those benefits for communities and administrators.

The third topic included case studies that examined perceptions of participants, parents, and teachers of exemplary music education programs (Baranski, 2011; Boon, 2014; Kelly-McHale, 2013; Lagston & Barrett, 2008; and Oare, 2008). They narrated how those programs are beneficial for the overall learning experiences of participants, as well as community engagement, which are important additions to previous research. These studies support the need for more qualitative studies that explore students' perspectives on music education programs. By analyzing case studies and borrowing their methodologies, I plan on exploring the backgrounds of the participants of a low SES school, analyzing how and why they are currently studying in a tuition-based advanced music program, and what benefits they perceive music instruction having for their future.

The fourth topic examined was research exploring teachers' perspectives on music programs, their expectations for students in areas of social inequity, and their views on the benefits of music instruction for students in low SES conditions (Clements, 2006; Doyle, 2012; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2006; Shaw, 2015). The last topic of this literature review presented students' perspectives on music education programs in underrepresented areas (Shields, 2001) and concluded that students value musical experiences in which music is a vehicle for self-expression and provides feelings of pleasure, happiness, and pride. It is still necessary, however, to further explore students' perspectives on these music education programs, so teachers can

match their expectations with their students' needs, and therefore, create more meaningful learning experiences for all students, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore perspectives of elementary and middle school violin students who began studying violin at a Title-I elementary school and were provided scholarships, enabling them to continue their music studies in a tuition-based advanced music academy.

Participants

Participants in this study are currently enrolled at a prestigious string program (which I will name Youth Midwest Strings) that is part of a major U.S. American Midwestern state university (which I will name Midwest University). Those students also have backgrounds in a project that offers group violin classes (which I will name Central Strings) in a nearby Title-I elementary school (which I will name Central Elementary School). Both string programs are located downtown of a small Midwestern city, which is surrounded by rural towns.

Central Elementary School is a Title-I school where, according to a federal department of education database, the majority of students are in free (80.6%) or reduced (3.8%) lunch. Regarding ethnicities, 56.8% of the students are White, followed by 17.7% Multiracial, 14.8% Black, 10.1% Hispanic, 0.3% American Indian and 0.3% Asian (IDOE, 2018).

Central Strings started in 2008 as a collaboration between the school of music of Midwest University and Central Elementary School. In the initial year of the program, all first grade students (approximately 45 students) were offered two 25-minute group violin classes per week during the school day, as well as small group coachings during recess. A year after the project was introduced, it was expanded to include all first and second graders at Central Elementary. Because of the success of the program and an increase of parents' support, in its third year,

Central Strings began providing any third through sixth grader the option to take violin class during their specials period, take private lessons during recess, and have a practice instrument.

According to Brenner (2011), the founder and the current director of the project, in the third year of the program, parents noticed an increase in students' pleasure, and the project became a powerful tool for bringing positive energy to the school. The multiple concerts provided throughout the year connected students to music and gave them a feeling of accomplishment and success (Brenner, 2011). As part of the partnership with Midwest University, students from the school of music who have received training and instruction in pedagogy courses are brought in from the university to assist in the program. Central Strings also receives funding through donors, who are affiliated with the university and other non-profit organizations, and student teachers who have a part-time job in the program (either as student "helpers" or lead teachers) are paid through Midwest University. Central Strings also provides opportunities for elementary students who are interested and committed to moving further with violin studies to study at the Youth Midwest Strings, with partial and full scholarships to cover tuition costs.

In contrast to Central Strings, the Youth Midwest Strings (YMS) is a tuition-based extracurricular program that offers string instruction for students ages 4-18, including through private and group lessons, chamber music, and orchestral coachings with faculty members from the prestigious Midwest University School of Music. According to their website, the price to attend the program varies from $430 to $815 per semester. Weekly individual lessons (ranging from 30-60 minutes), chamber music coachings, theory classes, and group violin classes are offered for all students of the program. Advanced students are also offered masterclasses with guest artists throughout the semester. In addition to classes and lessons, students have a busy

performance schedule, with at least three performances per semester in which every student performs both a solo and in ensemble groups. Students who are more advanced at YMS tend to be highly competitive, participating in international music competitions, and auditioning to world leading music colleges around the world.

Both programs share similar curriculum and goals for group classes. The founder of the Central Strings program is also a major contributor to the YMS and therefore, there are overlaps in the repertoire used for classes, as well as violin techniques and pedagogy. However, Central Strings and the YMS have major structural differences, including the location of each program and the average SES of participants. Consequentially, moving from one group to the other is a marked change for that community of students. Because Central Strings is located in a public school of lower SES, the community of students tend to be economically disadvantaged. In contrast, because YMS is located in a prestigious music university and is a tuition-based program, students tend to be more economically privileged.

I conducted interviews with five current students and scholarship recipients from the YMS. Four of those students are attending Central Strings (4^{th}-6^{th} graders) and one is a former student of the program (currently in 8^{th} grade). Student participants were selected with the help of YMS' director, who informed me about students' scholarship status and their school backgrounds. During the initial stages of the current study, I invited two other students from YMS who do not receive scholarships, but who attended Central Strings for a short period of time. Those two students did not sign the consent and assent forms, and therefore were not able to participate in the study. All parents of the five student participants were invited to participate in the study, and four of their parents agreed to participate.

Student participants had similarities in that they have backgrounds at Central Strings and are receiving scholarships to participate at YMS; however, they represented a range of personalities and backgrounds. There were four females who are still enrolled at Central Strings—Mariana, Andrea, Leslie, and Allison—and one male, Nick, who is a former student at Central Strings. For the purpose of maintaining participants' privacy, I am using pseudonyms. Mariana, Andrea, Leslie, and Allison are in a group class that I teach at Central Strings. Mariana and Andrea also receive group instruction from me at YMS. Mariana and Allison are my private students at YMS.

Mariana is a fourth grade student who has been playing the violin since first grade. She has been at YMS for two years and she receives a full scholarship to attend the program. She usually comes to Midwest University to attend her group classes and lessons with her father, but sometimes her mother comes along. Her father Pedro has a strong Spanish accent when speaking English, and he was present in every interview conducted with Mariana. He comes to every violin event his daughter plays, and he is a big advocate of both Central Strings and YMS. During the interview, he mentioned that he does not have music literacy, but tries to help Mariana with her violin practice. When around her parents, Mariana speaks Spanish, and she switches to English when talking with teachers and friends. She is one of the youngest students in her violin class at Central Strings, and about the same age as students in her violin group classes at YMS. All the female students participating in this study are in the same group violin class at Central Strings, and Mariana and Andrea are in the same violin group class at YMS (called "Book 2"). They talk and warm up together before class starts, and they are playing the same repertoire for their private lessons.

Andrea is a fifth grade student who started the violin in second grade and also has been at YMS with a full scholarship for two years. Her parents do not usually bring her to Midwest University or attend classes and concerts. Andrea comes to Midwest University with Leslie and her mother after school during the week and on Saturday mornings. She sometimes speaks Spanish with Mariana before classes and they seem to be very good friends who get together outside school or violin activities. The teachers' communication with her parents is very limited; their spoken English seems to be very limited and the only contact I had with them was through the assent and consent forms that were signed. I did not receive answers from the phone calls I gave about participating in the interview, and therefore no data from her parents was collected.

Leslie is a fourth grade student who has been playing the violin since first grade and has been at YMS for two years. Her mother, who is a music teacher at Central Elementary, brings her to Midwest University. Leslie receives a half scholarship to attend the program. She is in a more advanced group class at YMS (called "Book 2/3"), and she reported that she loved to show her violin skills by playing her solo music at Central Strings. She seemed very excited for the interviews and was dressed in bright and colorful clothes. Her mother Ellen also plays the violin. She mentioned that she started teaching Leslie how to play the violin when she was four years old, but it was not a great experience for her. She claims to practice violin together with Leslie and to follow what her private teacher says. She also mentioned that her daughter is sometimes impatient with her, but Ellen is still an active participant in Leslie's violin practice.

Allison is a sixth grade student who started the violin in second grade, took a break in third grade, and returned to it in fourth grade. She has also been at YMS with a full scholarship for two years. She is dropped off at Midwest University by her mother Bianca, who is a law student at the university. She usually comes with her younger sister. Unlike the parents of the

other study participants, Allison's mother does not stay in the classrooms during lessons and group classes. Allison spoke very eloquently during the interviews and always checked her phone to contact her mother before and after interviews. Allison usually dresses up with Central Elementary school t-shirts that said "Show Choir" and "Robotics team." During class and private lessons, she does some dance moves whenever she successfully plays a song without any mistakes. Allison is playing the same repertoire as Mariana and Andrea, but she is placed in a lower group class at YMS ("Book 1B"). Her mother Bianca drops Allison off at the program and is always present at concerts. In the interview, she mentioned that Allison also participates in other extracurricular activities, such as show choir and robotics, making it harder to fit and schedule all activities in the week. She also reported that she has no music or arts background and is very grateful that Allison receives artistic opportunities.

Nick is an eighth grade student who started playing the violin in second grade and has been at YMS with a full scholarship for four years. He comes to Midwest University with his mother to attend the program. In interviews, he mentioned that he still attend concerts at Central Elementary and he keeps friendships with current students of Central Strings. During his interview, he wore hoodies and shorts and used slang, such as "bro" and "you know what I mean?" He is the most advanced in the group classes ("Book 4A"), and he is the only participant who has access to and participates in a school orchestra. His mother Kaitlin is a book keeper and also claimed that she did not receive music or arts training when in school. She is a big supporter of both violin programs, and she is always present at Nick's concerts and classes. She mentioned that she makes sure to introduce herself and Nick to donors and directors of both violin programs, showing her appreciation and the positive impacts the program brings to students and communities.

In order to facilitate the organization of participants of the study, a table below provides student participants' pseudonym, gender, grade, and violin group level, parent participants' pseudonym, and researcher's teaching experience with student participants.

Table 1
Participants

Researcher Relationship to Student	Student Participant	Parent Participant
Private and group student at YMS Group student at Central Strings	Mariana Gender: Female Grade: Fourth Advanced group at Central Strings and Book 2 group at YMS	Pedro
Group student at YMS Group student at Central Strings	Andrea Gender: Female Grade: Fifth Advanced group at Central Strings and Book 2 group at YMS	No parents interviewed
Group student at Central Strings	Leslie Gender: Female Grade: Fourth Advanced group at Central Strings and Book 2/3 group at YMS	Ellen
Private and group student at YMS	Allison Gender: Female Grade: Sixth Advanced group at Central Strings and Book 1B group at YMS	Bianca
No teaching backgrounds with student	Nick Gender: Male Grade: Eight Central Strings Alum and Book 2 group at YMS	Kaitlin

Design

This study followed the design of a qualitative case study. Through the cases of the student participants of this study, their responses will reveal their experiences both at Central Strings and at YMS. According to Merriam (2016), a case study is an investigation of a unit of study that explores a certain phenomenon within its real-life context, considering all boundaries between the phenomenon and context (p. 38). She explains: "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 6). In this case study, extensive interviews with students of the YMS who came from a Title-I school were conducted for the purpose of collecting a first-person narrative on what they have been experiencing in music classes. I developed case descriptions for each of the student participants. Within each case, interviews allowed students to express how they transitioned from Central Strings to YMS, what they perceive as benefits of music instruction, and the differences between the programs with contrasting SES. Looking across each case revealed similarities and differences between their experiences. These were divided and labeled in different categories and themes.

Data Collection and Analysis

The student interaction component of this study consisted of two sets of open-ended questions. I conducted two interviews, which lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, with each student. One interview was conducted during the first half of the fall 2019 semester, and the other was conducted at the end of that semester. Following the student interviews, to facilitate triangulation, I conducted a short 15-minute interview with four participating parents at the end of the fall 2019 semester.

I analyzed all of the data collected through emergent category coding (Merriam, 2016). I created a word list with a word or short phrase for each sentence of data collected in order to reduce the data set. Once I had a reduced set, I separated words into categories that reflected topics related to my research questions. I provided participants the opportunity to review findings and ensure that information collected is accurate and interpreted adequately in a process that facilitated member checking (Creswell, 2007). I used age-appropriate language to verify that the findings are indicative of students' perceptions. Parents' interviews were used as a means of comparison and cross-checking data collected from each student participant. Parents' interviews served as a triangulation strategy, which Merriam (2016) describes as a process used to increase the credibility and internal validity of a qualitative study. Though member checking during the second students' interviews and using parents' interviews as a triangulation strategy, I verified that the finds were indicative of students' perceptions.

Other qualitative case studies that explored students' perspectives and perceptions of music programs were detailed in the previous chapter of this study. The studies that adopted this design (Baranski, 2011; Boon, 2014; Kelly-McHale, 2013; Langston & Barrett, 2008; Oare, 2008; and Shields, 2001) were adapted to best fit the research questions of this study. For instance, the interview questions designed by Baranski (2011) focused on two categories: 1) to understand what motivates people to participate in a community music program and; 2) to understand the experiences that keep them engaged in a community music program.

Similarly to Baranski (2011), Shields (2001) designed interview questions based on different categories that investigated students' experiences, but from both the students' and parents' perspectives. In order to analyze the impact of music education and mentoring for "at-risk" urban adolescents, Shields separated interview questions into five categories: 1)

descriptions of the student and students' school experiences; 2) the role and importance of music and music education in the lives of students and parents; 3) the responses of the students to participation in musical performance groups with mentoring; 4) the teachers' role as a mentor to the students; and 5) the practical considerations of music participation (p. 280). I adapted those categories and designed questions that will be answered only by students and their parents. In addition, category number four will not be used in this study because teachers' roles are not a part of this research.

I also analyzed and adapted my interview questions based on a study by Langston and Barrett (2008). Their research was designed to explore students' narratives about how social capital is manifested in a community choir setting. They used one particular case, the Milton Community Choir. Using narrative analytic procedures, the authors' interview questions were divided into seven parts: 1) greeting and introduction; 2) demographics: a general description of students' backgrounds in musical activities, education and community; 3) the community choir as an entity: a description of students' perspectives on their participation in the choir; 4) choir members: a description of students' roles as a member of the choir; 5) interpersonal relationships: a description of students' community engagement inside and outside choir; 6) motivation: what motivates students' to participate in the community choir; and 7) the community: a description of the local community generally and musically (pp. 346-347). Those parts were adapted for the purpose of my study, which explored students' perspectives on two violin programs: Youth Midwest Strings and Central Strings.

After a careful review of qualitative case study models, I organized the semi-structured interviews into three parts: two sets of interviews for students (one in the first half and other in second half of fall 2019) and interview questions for parents. The first set of student interviews

contained 32 questions divided into five categories: 1) greetings and introduction; 2) students' demographics/backgrounds; 3) Central Strings experiences; 4) Youth Midwest Strings experiences; and 5) motivation. The second set of student interviews served as a way to revise and confirm findings from the previous interview. It had nine questions divided into three categories: 1) recapitulation; 2) confirmation; and 3) further connections. The last set of interview questions were for student participants' parents that supported triangulation and served as a way to confirm previous findings. It contained seven questions regarding their child's participation at YMS and the musical and social impacts of the program. Questions for each category were articulated and a semi-structured interview plan was designed. All interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

Timeline

In September of 2019, I applied and received IRB approval from Indiana University to conduct interviews with students and parents participating at Youth Midwest Strings. Then, in September of 2019, I contacted students and parents during their group and private instruction to complete a consent form. For students who I do not teach, I went to their private lessons to explain the study and I sent a letter, consent, and assent forms home. Parents and students had one week to opt into the study. After receiving their consent, I set dates to start the interview processes. In October of 2019, I conducted the first semi-structured interviews with the five student participants. Those interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded. I completed the first set of interviews over the course of two weeks.

I started conducting the second set of interviews in October and November of 2019, after completing the transcriptions and codes for the first set of interviews. Part of the second interview set was used to elaborate on specific parts of the first interview. I finished conducting,

transcribing, and coding the second set of student interviews by the end of November of 2019, and I contacted parents during students' lessons to start their 15-minute interview. I did not receive any responses from Andrea's parents after contacting them via phone calls and their private teacher. Her parents were absent for lessons and concerts, and their interview was not conducted. Parents' interviews were conducted based on information their child provided, and they were transcribed and coded over the course of two weeks. All data was transcribed and coded by the end of December of 2019.

This chapter has described the methodological approach taken toward exploring students' perceptions of both Central Strings and YMS programs. Chapter four will present findings, illuminating the students' responses that were most pertinent to the study's research questions, and it will explain how they were organized in categories for analyses.

Chapter 4: Findings

Analyzing students' and parents' perceptions of violin learning from a Title-I elementary school and from an tuition-based advanced violin program revealed several themes regarding how students were introduced to instrumental music education, what encouraged them to engage in advanced musical activities, and how they see music as a benefit for their future learning and life. This chapter presents themes that emerged from my analysis of interview data generated with participants. The following discussion is organized according to the study's research questions:

1) Why did participants pursue advanced violin study after attending group violin classes at a Title-I elementary school?
2) What do participants with backgrounds in a Title-I school consider to be the benefits of advanced violin studies?
3) What do students perceive as key differences between their initial elementary school violin study and their current instruction at a tuition-based advanced music academy?

I address each question individually, beginning with an overview of themes emerging from students' and parents' responses.

Research question 1: Why did participants pursue advanced violin study after attending group violin classes at a Title-I elementary school?

Four themes were found across students' and parents' responses regarding question one: students and parents were not aware of Youth Midwest Strings (YMS), students desired musical growth, students had different social motivations before attending the program, and scholarships had a big influence, especially for the parents. All student participants reported that their invitation to be at YMS with a scholarship offer came from group violin teachers at Central

Strings, the music teacher at Central Elementary, and the director of YMS. Four students reported that they became aware of YMS only after receiving invitations and scholarship offers to attend the program. Allison said: "My teacher at Central Strings . . . recommended [YMS] to me. I did not know about [YMS] at that time. She recommended it to me, I tried and liked it, so here I am now." Similarly, Mariana mentioned: "I did not know YMS was 'made up' before they invited me." Nick's parent Kaitlin commented on the surprise she got from the invitation: "I didn't know what it was about, but . . . they kind of expressed to me that it was a pretty big deal." Leslie, on the other hand, emphasized that her music teacher mother already knew about YMS, reporting: "My mom kind of told me that I was able to go to YMS, and I felt kind of excited." Leslie's mother Ellen mentioned: "I was really excited for the opportunity. I knew she was excited about violins . . . also knew that YMS was really solid and it would be a good foundation for her."

Although only Leslie and her mother Ellen knew about YMS and its reputation, when students were invited to the program, four students believed that Central Strings taught them the necessary skills for the program, including scales, how to practice, and repertoire. Allison said: "If I wasn't at Central Strings, I wouldn't be at YMS. I didn't know that was a thing first." Allison's mother Bianca commented:

> I was excited and a bit surprised that she took interest in playing an instrument I guess, because that's not a skill that I have, or not in our household and anyone that she seemed growing up, so this kind of came about through Central Elementary and them having an artistic program.

Nick also emphasized: "I didn't really know how to get inside of [YMS] . . . I didn't know what you really have to do." Regarding previous music skills, Mariana reported: "If I didn't know

about [violins before coming to YMS], I wouldn't really know how to handle it. Like, I might drop it, or break it and just use is as a toy." Andrea added that being able to play scales helped her being at YMS.

All five students also reported that they were interested in joining YMS in order to grow musically, including by learning new songs and music notation. Allison mentioned, "I knew that I wanted to get better at the violin . . . so I thought that if I stayed at YMS, it would make me want to grow. . . . [I decided to stay at YMS] probably because of the one-on-one time you get." Similarly, Leslie said:

> My mom kind of told me that I was able to go to YMS and I felt kind of excited. . . . [Ms. J] used to teach my class a little bit, and I remember how she said: "It's gonna be kind of like class, except it's just you." And, so I was like "ok" and it was fun.

While Leslie and Allison enjoyed the private instruction offered at YMS and saw its potential to improve musically, Nick, Mariana and Andrea said that, when they first joined YMS, they were most excited to learn new songs. Nick said, "I was interested in learning new songs and making it further." Andrea also emphasized her excitement about learning how to read music notation. While all student participants showed excitement to grow musically at YMS, only one parent described a similar emotion. Leslie's mother Ellen, who is a music teacher, noted: "I like the . . . balance where they get to play in group [classes] quite a bit, but they also get that one-on-one and in some cases even an extra helper lesson."

While all participants described musical growth as a reason to join YMS, all students also stated different social motivations for enrolling in the program. Two students recalled that friends encouraged them to join YMS. Nick reported a sense of pride that he was the only student at Central Elementary who showed interest in continuing violin studies, and he was the

first student to receive a scholarship to attend YMS. The remaining two students, believed that they made clear efforts to be at YMS, such as trying their best in class and practicing at Central Strings.

Mariana and Allison reported that their friendship played a role in their decision to join YMS. Mariana said that she received an invitation to participate in YMS from a friend who was already at the program. She stated: "I was like the first friend my friend made, and probably she only knew me. That's probably why she gave the invitation to me." Allison, on the other hand, said that she took a year off from violin during third grade, and by request of her friends, she joined again in fifth grade at Central Strings, together with YMS:

> Since all [my friends] stayed on violin . . . they all had an extra year of practice. . . . I knew that I wanted to get better at the violin. I also knew that I was somewhat behind at Central Strings because I took off a year, so I thought that if I stayed at YMS, it would make me want to grow and be with my friends.

Different than Mariana and Allison, Nick felt pride at Central Elementary that motivated him to grow at the violin. He reported that when he was in third grade, he was receiving violin instruction during his recess, which was a big commitment for him. Because of his effort to keep learning the violin, he was the first student from Central Elementary to be invited to attend YMS. Although almost giving up on violin studies before attending the program, he mentioned that he gave a sense of representation to violin students at Central Elementary:

> Since I was . . . at YMS, and I was also in violin at Central Strings, I got to like sort of represent [the program] . . . I was sort of like a leader for the violin kids at Central Strings, and that's what made it better, because some kids went to me and said like: "I want to learn too" and stuff. . . . When [Central Strings students] saw that I go to Midwest

> University and go to a big program, they saw that . . . they can definitely get to where I was if they tried hard enough, so they started trying more, and more people started to join YMS. I just saw that and it just made it happier.

While Nick felt that he encouraged students from Central Strings to join YMS and gave his classmates a sense of pride and enjoyment in playing the violin, two students felt proud of being part of YMS because of the efforts they made as students. Leslie believes she received an invitation to YMS because she liked the violin and tried her best. Andrea, on the other hand, was uncertain when answering the same question, but admitted that she thinks she is a good violinist:

> That's the part that I don't really know. Because when my teacher . . . arranged who was in the advanced or not in the advanced group [at Central Strings], at first I wasn't in the advanced group, and then she just moved me up . . . so now I am in the advanced group. So . . . I think I am a good violinist, I guess.

The last theme found across participants' responses regarding research question one relates to the scholarships offered for students to participate in YMS. Two students presented a sense of pride about receiving a scholarship, while only one student saw scholarships as a financial necessity to attend YMS. Andrea and Leslie disclosed that they were proud and glad of receiving a scholarship, and they connected those feelings to their family being happy for them. Nick, on the other hand, mentioned: "[I would] probably not [be at YMS if not for Central Strings], because my mom would have to pay extra . . . money every month. Because . . . with a scholarship, you don't have to really pay as much as you would if you just joined."

While Leslie feels proud of the opportunity, her mother Ellen mentioned the scholarship as essential to attend the program: "We are in half scholarship and we wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise." Similar to Ellen, Kaitlin confirmed what Nick said: "There was no way I could

afford to send him." Allison's mother, Bianca, also expressed the need for a scholarship to attend YMS, even though Allison did not mention scholarship in her interviews. Bianca said: "I was . . . grateful for the opportunity that she would be able to [go to YMS] in a scholarship because she wouldn't have the opportunity otherwise." Pedro did not mention scholarship in the interview; however, his daughter Mariana mentioned her friend Nick receiving a scholarship:

> Later I get to play in lots of concerts [like] Nick . . . one time he played, he got money . . . I don't know what [it] is called. If in college . . . you did all your classes and the teachers gave you a good grade, the teachers give you money. . . . A scholarship! That's what they gave to Nick when he performed.

While Mariana seemed to see positive impacts of scholarships as a way to demonstrate excellent student skills and give opportunities for students to attend other programs, she also mentioned: "No, [receiving a scholarship] never happened to me." It is unclear why Mariana was not aware of the scholarship opportunity she received that enabled her to attend YMS.

In summary, four themes were found across students' and parents' responses regarding the first research question. Most of the students were not aware of the existence of Youth Midwest Strings, or if they knew about it, they did not have clear expectations of it. The majority of students believed that Central Strings played a big role in introducing, helping students enroll, and teaching them proper musical skills that enabled them to attend YMS. Before attending YMS, all the students aspired to musical growth, which played an important role in their enrollment. Students explained that their musical growth goals included having private lessons and learning new music. Regarding social motivations, however, students perceived different reasons, such as friendship influences, a sense of being proud among their peers, and a sense of having good violin skills. Lastly, students and parents held different views regarding scholarship;

three parents and one student perceived it as a financial necessity to attend the program, while two students perceived it as a reward.

Research question 2: What do participants with backgrounds in a Title-I school consider to be the benefits of advanced violin studies?

Four themes were found across students' and parents' responses for the second research question regarding benefits of advanced violin instruction: students believe they can achieve musical goals with YMS; students believe they can become professional musicians and enjoy music throughout their lives; students learned how to use music skills to succeed in other arts and subjects; and students developed positive socio-emotional connections to music learning. Regarding musical benefits of YMS, four students mentioned that they learn proper technique, music notation, and more advanced songs. Leslie reported: "I guess what inspires me the most is that I am going to eventually be really good [at the violin]. . . . I mean playing like in between the fingerboard and the bridge, having an open sound and stuff." Likewise, Allison mentioned: "I feel like it helps us in . . . technical ways." Nick made a similar statement: "I have upgraded in books, got better in intonation" with the help of YMS. Also attending to music literature, Mariana mentioned: "My favorite [part of YMS] is that I get to learn more advanced songs." Like Mariana, Andrea explained: "I can learn new music and bowing and knowing different kinds of notes."

The parents also seemed to recognize the students' progress at YMS. Allison's mother Bianca mentioned:

> I don't have the skills to play a musical instrument, so this is really her first kind of exposure to playing an instrument. . . . From not having [music instruction] at all to being where she's at right now, I have seen a lot of progress.

Pedro also confirmed Mariana's musical progresses: "Right now I see now to 'notes,' like the names; sometimes I play with her and she is like, 'No daddy, this is not it!'. . . So yeah, I saw that she's learned a lot, and I'm very happy for that." Kaitlin even expressed surprise to see how fast her son Nick was progressing: "I am actually surprised. Even from one week to the next . . . having three different books to work in, and the etudes, and then moving to third position and all that. . . . I can hear a difference and see from his teacher."

Similarly, Ellen commented on Leslie's improvement:

> Sometimes she gets really excited and [the teachers] say: "You need to slow down, you need to play this 20 times through and make it really solid." And the whole idea of cleaning up a solo while she can advance other skills [is] really great.

Four students also mentioned that they enjoy working at their own pace with private instructors at YMS. Leslie said: "[Students at YMS] learn new songs at their own pace . . . my private lesson teacher . . . tells me what to practice on and what to do to make myself better at the violin." Her mother, Ellen, also saw benefits of private instruction:

> It's a nice balance where they get to play in a group quite a bit, but they also get that one-on-one and in some cases even an extra helper lesson. Her teacher talks about what her expectations are . . . she's kind of a perfectionist and so I think violin is good for her because she knows what's expected.

Similarly, Allison noted: "I think it's a great opportunity . . . to get that one on one time. . . . You can use it to work on different things . . . if you're behind something, you can take time out of your lesson to work on that piece of music."

In addition to private lessons, three students showed excitement for performance opportunities YMS gives. Leslie stated: "I am most excited for concerts . . . I kind of like

concerts in general." When asked about her favorite parts of YMS, Mariana answered: "Performances . . . and the cookie concert! . . . Because then I can show people what I've been learning and I just like showing them my solos." Similar to Mariana, Nick said: "[My favorite part of YMS is] probably going to the concerts because I like when people say that I did a really good job or what not." In addition, he mentioned:

> [At the] concerts . . . there's so many people. . . . In the front are always the little kids that play the little songs and the back they play the harder songs. . . . The concerts are pretty cool because when we're sitting down, the better players are doing their solos. It's pretty cool to watch.

Three students mentioned they can have opportunities to learn different instruments when participating at YMS. Mariana said: "YMS is fun and stuff, you get to play whatever instrument, like cello, or trumpet . . . or [do] opera." Mariana's father Pedro confirmed: "They can play all instruments they want [at YMS]. . . . It is very good for them to grow positive." Nick, noticed that YMS is a well-known instrumental program and added: "I guess going to one instrument can bring you to a different one." Although none of the students interviewed formally play other instruments, there seemed to be a sense that YMS offers opportunities for students to choose other instruments. This may be because these students, who had to start with violin, see other children who started the pre-college programs on different instruments. The interviewees may assume that the children who play different instruments switched instruments or could decide to play another instrument from the beginning of the program.

The next theme found across all students involves music making aiding in the achievement of future goals, such as becoming professional musicians and teachers, having a general appreciation for music, and growing musically to be like their main role models.

Regarding music as a profession, three students wished to find opportunities as a performer in the future, and three also wished to be violin teachers. Leslie said: "I want to do multiple things when I get older . . . maybe play music for movies or something." Likewise, Nick noted: "I just want to make it to a big symphony," and Mariana showed an interest in playing violin at an opera performance. In addition to being a performer, Mariana also saw herself as a teacher: "I am going to be a general teacher and a teacher at YMS and help people with the violin." Similarly, Nick and Andrea expressed an interest in teaching. Andrea explained: "I'll go to a school that probably doesn't do any music and go there and . . . help kids like learn how to play the violin." In contrast with the other students, Allison seemed unsure about her future with the violin:

> I've thought about [being a musician in the future] . . . and then I think about another thing . . . and then I think about another thing and I'm like: 'Yeah.' . . . And now I'm in this universe where I don't know what I want to be.

Nick was the only student who mentioned music as a way of bringing financial stability to his future:

> Getting a good job and caring for my family and stuff is definitely something that inspires me. . . . If I can make money out of [violin], I feel like music would be a big impact on my life because I could afford things that I want and need.

His mother Kaitlin confirmed that Nick sees the financial benefits of music, and added her support of him:

> Whenever someone asks him what he wants to do, he talks about playing. But he talks a lot about making money playing violin, and I don't know . . . if I made him feel that way. . . . I'm hoping that for him, the love for playing the violin and being able to have his own

> expression and not be stuck with doing whatever he can to make money. But do what he loves to make money, whether is with violin or whatever he chooses.

Although Allison was in doubt about her future profession, she confirmed her love for music in her life: "I love music . . . I don't think I can ever live my life without music. I don't think I can go a day without playing or listening or dancing to something. It's just . . . a big part of my life." Leslie, Mariana, and Nick also showed appreciation for music and mentioned playing the violin their entire lives. Mariana said: "I could just keep playing until I'm really old and I can't really play, and I could just help." Similarly, Nick noted: "[I plan on playing] my whole life until I can't. . . . Like, if I got like super sick and also in the hospital . . . [or] if I got too old."

Two parents expressed appreciating that the program gave opportunities for students from a Title-I school to pursue advance music studies. Bianca explained:

> I know that Central Elementary's district that we're in is lower socioeconomic status, so I know that Allison and many of her peers are getting an opportunity that they wouldn't otherwise have. I know that there are a couple of other girls that are in this program specifically that have really kind of advanced and are in similar situations. So, I mean . . . all positive things. I've seen them being able to do this.

Similarly, Ellen talks about students' encouragement to be at YMS:

> I've also been really proud of the Central Strings because they feel like there's this strange assumption that a lot of our students come from low SES. . . . We're lucky, we're not low income, but [Leslie's] peers are seeing that that doesn't translate to lower performances. And they are doing well and turning to this beautiful musicians. It's very exciting.

Two students showed excitement to be at YMS because they expected to grow musically, and to be like their role models in the future. Nick said:

> Who inspires me is actually Joshua Bell because he's just really good. But of course he was a prodigy, so it's gonna be hard to make it up to his level, but . . . getting a good job and caring for my family and stuff is definitely something that inspires me.

Similarly, Allison explains:

> There was a day at Central Elementary . . . [our violin teacher] has showed us a video of this women who dances and plays the violin at the same time, and I was like: "Oh my God, I want to do that." So, I was like: "Well, I can't do that until I can play the violin like . . . someone like that." So that was what got me at YMS.

The next theme was students using music skills to succeed in other arts and subjects. Four students mentioned violin helping them with other kinds of art, including dance, visual arts, and playing the piano. Leslie stated that playing the violin allowed her to figure out notes on the piano, and she enjoy playing the violin songs she knows in the piano. Her mother Ellen confirmed: "With her violin pieces, she likes to figure those out on the piano . . . [She is] not really a pianist, but like a violinist pianist (laughs)." Nick and Allison felt similar about violin and dancing. Nick said: "I feel like it's all musical, so I feel like going from a violin would be hard to go to like dance, but at least they would be able to feel the rhythm and all different sources." Allison added:

> I think [playing the violin] helps me find the right realm of things, especially when I'm dancing. When I go home, I sometimes like to freestyle. And when I freestyle, I take out my violin, and then I'm like: "Oh, let me try something different." . . . I pick out a

> rhythm, and then I record it, and then I dance to the rhythm that I picked out, so . . . it's like a chain reaction, I think.

Her mother Bianca also sees the benefits of combining music with other arts that are offered at Central Elementary: "I know Allison . . . gets another form of creative expression [at YMS] . . . another creative outlet, so that's nice." Similarly, Andrea expressed that violin helped her with visual arts and other music skills in show choir:

> I used to do art and I still do it. . . . I'm like: . . . "I should do a music note," like draw one . . . and the [music] signs. . . . [Once] I put my violin away and I was bored. I decided to do an art thing . . . from Bob Ross. I did it and it looked good. . . . There's different notes and sounds [in violin class] . . . so like, for show choir, I can do those notes [too].

Two students stated that music helps them with other non-arts subjects. Leslie said playing the violin makes her more concentrated on things, and Mariana stated that singing the violin songs she knows relaxes her. In addition, Nick reported: "Violin helps with academic skills because it's when you read the notes is like reading a book. . . . If I remember, you're actually smarter if you play an instrument . . . you have some type of 'smarts.'"

The last theme found involved relations between students' music learning and a variety of positive socio-emotional responses. Students showed a general enjoyment of performing, and they saw music as a way to connect and socialize with other musicians. Leslie and Mariana showed a general enjoyment about performing for their parents and other audiences to make them happy. Andrea, on the other hand, said that she likes to see her colleagues advancing: "My favorite part is that I see new people being better at violin. . . . Like Mariana and Leslie came up to the higher group."

Two students reported that music helped or can help them to socialize with other people. Mariana noticed: "When I'm like a teacher, and then I go to performances, I am going to *learn* some more teachers and we might become friends." Similarly, Nick said: "Usually in the YMS summer [program] there's a performance that . . . we get pizza sometimes after or before . . . and also you can make friends." He also noted that his friends initially did not support him being a violinist, but then they all came to an agreement, which made him want more social opportunities with the violin:

> Some of my friends, they started making fun of me because they play sports. . . . Then they were like: "You know what, we should get an apartment when we get older and once we get older, I'll be a basketball player and you can be a violinist, and we will live in a mansion." . . . And then, if I had high popularity [being a violinist] that would also be an impact in my life, because stuff would just be crazy.

While the students reported socio-emotional benefits, such as allowing enjoyable performance opportunities and connecting to other friendships, the four parents seemed to be focused more on the social benefits of violin learning. Pedro mentioned that Mariana became more social after being introduced to YMS. Kaitlin added:

> [Nick] has made some friends with other kids from YMS. During practice, they would group together and talk together, so that's encouraging. And for him just being out of Central Elementary, it's kind of hard for me to see all of those relationships with other kids . . . he's 14 now, so it's a little hard (laughs). . . . But I know that for him being at the YMS is important to him.

Similarly, Ellen talked about the friendship of Central Strings' students at YMS:

> I know that there's definitely this Central Strings community . . . When the girls all come together [to YMS], they get really excited when they see each other, and they like playing to each other songs. They kind of hang out in the hallway and even my son who's not at YMS, got really close to this cohort. Even Nick . . . always comes out to eat with us and he's like the *older mentor*, it's really sweet.

These students' and parents' responses revealed four main themes involving the benefits of advanced violin studies for students from a Title-I school: 1) Students saw musical growth as a benefit of YMS. They learned proper technique, music notation, and more advanced songs, enjoyed private instruction and performance opportunities, and thought they had opportunities to learn different instruments; 2) Students were able to see themselves actively participating in music endeavors as adults. They saw themselves as future music teachers, performers, and great music appreciators, perceived music as a way to bring future financial stability, and strived to be like their role models in music; 3) Students' responses suggested that the advancement of their music learning contributed to their success in other activities, such as playing piano, dancing, and painting as well as enhances their concentration in other tasks; and 4) Students showed positive socio-emotional connections with music learning. They were able to meet more musicians and socialize with different groups of students.

Research question 3: What do students perceive as key differences between their initial elementary school violin study and their current instruction at a tuition-based advanced music academy?

Three main themes were found across students' and parents' responses regarding key differences of Central Strings and Youth Midwest Strings (YMS): both programs have structural and music teaching differences; there are distinct communities of students in both programs; and

students have different emotional responses to each program. Regarding differences in music teaching and structure, students described that violin teachers at Central Strings frequently used repetition as an instructional strategy, the group classes had more students, and it had student "helpers" who assist students if needed throughout the class. In contrast, students described that violin instruction at YMS used fewer repetitions, had smaller groups of students, and had an option for each student to receive a private "helper" lesson with students from Midwest University.

All five students mentioned that classes at Central Strings were more repetition based, especially when students started learning the violin in first or second grade. Leslie, Mariana, Nick and Andrea also reported not being fond of those repetitions, either because they would get tired from practicing or they would get bored. For instance, Leslie said: "Sometimes in the group lesson we have to repeat things. . . . I don't really like that." Similarly, Nick said: "I was playing the same thing over and over again and it just got boring."

All students also noticed that the "helpers" had different tasks in each setting. They explained that the helpers in both places are students from Midwestern University. However, at Central Strings, they work in a group setting, walking around during classes and fixing the students' positions when needed; whereas at YMS, the helpers schedule weekly private lessons with students who request a helper. Mariana explained: "The helpers [at Central Strings] don't like teach you, *teach you.* . . . They just like help you." Leslie, Mariana, and Andrea showed a preference for the helpers at YMS. Leslie said: "I guess [I prefer] the YMS ones because they are like my own helper." On the other hand, Allison explained the disadvantages of not having an in-class helper at YMS:

> There's no helpers . . . and I think that kind of takes away from YMS a little bit . . . [I like the helpers] because there's different kids who need different things, and with one teacher [it] is kind of harder to get to those different things for those different kids.

Regarding different student body sizes at each program, Allison, Mariana, and Leslie noted that group classes at YMS have fewer students, but a bigger audience. Allison said: "There are the parents [at YMS group classes], there's the 'pianoist' that also stays and watches, and there's a teacher." Mariana added: "There are parents, little kids, and strangers." (She might be referring to helpers, or to other students from Midwest University.)

The next theme found regarding differences between the programs refers to distinct communities of students. Leslie and Nick noticed that students in their group classes at YMS tend to be younger, and Leslie even noticed that they dress differently during concerts. Those findings may suggest that the community of students in each violin program has different access to music programs based on school SES. Leslie said: "So, the group classes at YMS, they are different first of all because mostly the kids there are like seven, so they are kind of younger." Regarding the concerts at YMS, she said: "I like it there. I like how everyone is wearing really nice clothes and stuff." Nick also commented on the students' age differences:

> What surprised me was that . . . a lot of little kids . . . are really young and I was just like one of the older type. . . . There was a bunch of kids in first or second grade that were in book one and I was in . . . 4th grade. I was in the same group as them, so it was sort of awkward and stuff.

Three students also noticed that there are more advanced players at YMS than at Central Strings. When asked about other friends who play the violin and do not participate at YMS, Mariana said

that they have other ways to play music. She explained: "Because I know more songs than them. They don't know Minuet no. 3." Similarly, Leslie added: "[My friend] doesn't play a whole lot."

Three students commented that they have fewer friends at YMS than at Central Strings. Allison said that, as opposed to YMS, students at Central Strings students are mostly in the same grade as her:

> [At Central Strings] I get to be in the same class as my friends; most of them are in the same grade. . . . I think at YMS we're like learning, so there's no really time to talk or to have friends.

Her mother Bianca agreed: "So she doesn't have much interactions that I'm aware of with other students in YMS. I think she knows a couple of the other girls that are at the YMS but also because they go to Central Strings." Similar to Allison, Mariana said she has more friends at Central Strings:

> I don't really know them [at YMS] . . . I only know Leslie and Andrea. . . . I know people from Central Strings, because it's my school and . . . I don't know that much people that come here [to YMS]. . . . My classmates don't go to YMS.

When asked about her perceptions of the differences between students in both programs, Bianca hesitated to answer:

> It's a difficult question to ask . . . I feel that my answer would be assumptive in whatever I answer, because we're not close to any of the other children in the YMS. So these are just inferences or assumptions drawn from my own observations, but I feel that there are rather obvious class differences, race differences, things like that.

Mariana's father Pedro also seemed hesitant to answer about differences of students:

> She talks, but not with everybody. But here [at YMS] she knows a couple of girls and she talks a lot with them. . . . But it's a little more difficult [at YMS] because all those little kids [at Central Strings] are in the same school, we live like in the same place, in the same community. . . . The first time [at YMS] I felt a little weird, because I saw our family like . . . the only "Hispanic girl," you know? . . . I don't know if I can explain . . . It is different people.

Differently than Allison and Mariana, Nick reported that there are students at YMS who have very strong friendships, but they participated in the more advanced groups:

> [Socializing] is really for people that are way up there. . . . But the ones that are way up there are really good friends because they are pretty much in middle and high school. I know like a couple of them, but I don't go and socialize with them. And at Central Strings, they all know me. Some of them don't really know me, but I know them because I've said something to them.

In addition, Nick added that he has more opportunities for socializing at Central Strings concerts:

> [The concerts] were fun because . . . some people I knew and my friends all joined. . . . Whenever we played at a place, we got to eat and hang out afterwards, so that was really cool. And then after a concert at Central Strings, we would see a friend and they would complement us and everything, so that was really cool.

His mother Kaitlin added that after concerts at Central Strings, they make sure to talk to sponsors and donors of the program, which does not happen at YMS. She said: "Well, at YMS, it's so overwhelming. And we don't know everyone involved, so we tend to skip out and try to get out of there, because it's just so busy."

Two students commented that there are fewer behavioral issues at YMS. Leslie said that students at Central Strings sometimes are "goofing off," which does not happen at YMS. Similarly, Andrea explained:

> Sometimes people get in trouble [at Central Strings]. . . . It is because sometimes they don't do what they are supposed to do. . . . Like sometimes they go on the iPad, and for violin they like don't listen, and they go on and read the other notes. . . . I don't really see [the same at YMS], because . . . some of the groups are really small, not all of them are big.

The last theme regarding differences between YMS and Central Strings is related to students' emotional reactions to both places. Students explained that at YMS, they get lost in the facilities of the university, they commit more time attending and practicing for classes, and they usually feel nervous and more pressure when performing. Four students noted that the time and commitment to participate in YMS is more than for Central Strings. Allison said:

> My least favorite part [of YMS] is that we have group class on Saturdays and Sundays. Because all my family is in [the South] so in the weekends I used to go down there, and now I have group class. . . . [YMS] was a little overwhelming. Like how many times you practice and practicing on the weekends.

In order to minimize commuting time, Mariana said that she takes her helper lessons after the group classes. She said: "I get really tired and after group classes, [and I still] have to practice with [my helper]." Nick added that he has to cut his leisure time:

> My friends all know that I go here because I always tell them that the reason I can't hang out at this time is because I have a violin thing to be at. . . . I'm like: "Dude, I have a violin today, tomorrow, and the next day, so I can't really hang out."

All parents also commented on the time commitment that the program requires. Bianca said: "It's very much like a balancing act for us, because [Allison] does so much, and I'm also super busy . . . so we're at capacity in that sense." Mariana's father Pedro talked about his routine to bring her to the program: "With my work, so today, Wednesday, I wake up at 4:00 A.M. and I come out of my job at one o'clock. Sometimes I take a little nap before bringing Mariana [to YMS], but that's alright." Nick's mother Kaitlin also pointed out the future difficulties attending the program:

> Next semester, [YMS] is changing his class, and I don't get out of work yet . . . so I have to now figure out how he's gonna catch a bus by himself to get over here . . . so, that's a little stressful for me as well. And group classes change from being one hour in a Saturday morning to being one hour thirty minutes in a weekday, and then your private lesson changes from half an hour to one hour.

Adding to the time commitment, Ellen explained that her daughter Leslie comes to the program with a colleague who is also participating at YMS and is having difficulties with the family's commitment to the program:

> We have to coordinate [rides] and we're trying to find the balance with her own family's involvement. It's actually really convenient for the two girls to come together, and that maybe adds two minutes of driving time, and the girls actually connect quite a bit, because they have back to back and they can play outside and see each other . . . but I think the tricky thing logistically, with her friend, where her friend's family does have a hard time with transportation . . . I think with the YMS model, family is such a big part of it. . . . I don't think the family had been in any of the concerts [at YMS], and things like

> that. . . . And so that's problematic, and we're actually looking to find a better solution for that.

In the last theme, students showed different emotional reactions to YMS and Central Stings. Four students described being more nervous and more pressured for performances at YMS. Mariana said:

> I get nervous at here for like solo recitals. . . . Probably because there's more people at YMS than Central Strings. There are parents, little kids and strangers. . . . It's not bad, but it could be, because if you go off the stage you might get lost, and a person might steal you.

Similarly, Leslie said: "Sometimes, when I have to breathe, it makes me a little nervous. Because at YMS I feel like they are kind of longer songs, and sometimes I feel like when there's another section you have to breathe." Nick added: "I feel like YMS is more nerve-racking than Central Strings because there is a lot more pressure because you have to be here two times before the practice otherwise you won't be able to go to the concert." His mother Kaitlin mentioned the added pressure for keeping his scholarship: "He actually missed one [class] because he had a dentist appointment, and I didn't realize he was going after school to those lessons, so I didn't tell anybody, and he just didn't show up. . . . It almost cost his scholarship."

As opposed to Leslie, Mariana, and Nick, Allison gets more nervous for concerts at Central Strings:

> I feel . . . a little bit more nervous now that I am in advanced group [at Central Strings]. . . . I feel like I can mess up more [at YMS] . . . mostly because the other people are older than me and more advanced than I am, which makes it not as stressful for me. Because at

> Central Strings I am one of the oldest, I am at the top of the scale, and all the eyes are set on us. And I feel all the pressure to succeed.

On a related note, four students expressed feelings of frustration and more nervousness regarding the sizes of the buildings at YMS. Mariana and Andrea said that they often get lost, which makes them uncomfortable. Mariana explained:

> Central Strings doesn't have that much buildings. . . . It's one building that's like really big, but I don't think you can get lost in there. . . . Central Strings is more comfortable for me because the one thing that I know is that if you forget the number, you can just look at the name tags.

Similarly, Andrea said: "There's a lot of rooms . . . you can kind of get lost here [at YMS]. It makes me feel weird because there's a lot of spaces." Nick made a similar observation, stating: "It is really hard to get around all those buildings . . . trying to figure out where to go, and stairs; there are a lot of stairs!" Allison noted that she feels more pressure because the buildings are always crowded:

> It makes me feel very different. [Being at YMS] makes me feel that there's more eyes on you. It makes you feel like everyone is watching you. I feel like at Central Strings they are a little more supportive, because you have so many different ranges and there's like all this different levels, especially at concerts. All those . . . level it out to where it seems like everybody is supporting everybody. . . . I feel like it is more pressure to succeed at YMS . . . especially saying that the parents . . . stay for practice. It's sometimes embarrassing because when you are in front of kids, it's a different environment, and when you're in front of parents it's like "I'm gonna mess up, and I'm gonna be embarrassed."

Similar to Allison, Nick stated:

> The way I feel about how people think of me is different for me [at YMS] because . . . the teachers are different, so I often don't talk to the teachers like I would at Central Strings or anything. I don't have as many friends here [at YMS] and don't know as many people. So walking around those buildings makes it hard too.

In sum, there were three main themes that described the students' perceptions of differences between Central Strings and YMS: 1) Both programs have structural and music teaching differences. YMS has fewer students in group classes, offers private "helper lessons," and uses fewer repetitions as a practicing mechanism during classes; 2) There are noticeable differences between communities of students in both programs. Students at YMS tend to be younger, be more advanced players, and have less behavioral issues, and Central String students tend to have more opportunities for socializing and having a larger number of friends than at YMS; and 3) Students perceived different emotional reactions to both programs. They tend to feel more nervous at and commit more time and effort to YMS, and most feel added frustrated because of the sizes of the buildings at the program.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of violin students who started in a free violin program at a Title-I elementary school (Central Strings) and are now scholarship recipients and enrolled at a tuition-based advanced music program (Youth Midwest Strings). Through two sets of interviews, five students shared their experiences with music, including why they chose to pursue advanced violin studies, how they see music as a benefit for their future learning, and their different experiences at YMS and Central Strings. Four of those students' parents were also interviewed. The following discussion of findings will address each research question individually, followed by the limitations of the current study, implications for teaching practice, and future research.

Research Question 1: Why did participants pursue advanced violin study after attending group violin classes at a Title-I elementary school?

Four themes were found across students and parents' responses regarding the first research question. 1) Most of the students and parents were not aware of Youth Midwest Strings (YMS), either as an advanced string program, or not having clear expectations of it. The majority of students believed that Central Strings played a big role in introducing and helping them enroll at YMS, teaching students proper musical skills and about the advanced violin program. 2) All the students aspired to musical growth before attending YMS, which played an important role in their enrollment. Students explained that their musical growth goals included having private lessons and learning new music. 3) Students had different social motivations for attending YMS. They reported friendship influences, felt proud of being invited to YMS, and perceived value in their violin skills. 4) Students and parents perceived different views regarding scholarship; three parents and one student perceived it as a financial necessity to attend the program, while two students perceived it as an opportunity to attend YMS.

The finding that students who come from Title-I backgrounds are likely to be unaware of opportunities for enrollment in music programs aligns with Costa-Giomi (2008). According to her study, "Teachers believed that the geographical location of the school determined the type of community resources available to them and the ability of parents to participate in music activities" (p. 25). In addition to students and parents in lower SES locations having less access to music programs, the author reported that, compared with students from higher SES schools, students in those areas have fewer opportunities to go on music-related fieldtrips. According to the findings of the current study, most of the students and parents were not aware of YMS, and the majority of students believed that Central Strings played a significant role in teaching students proper instrument skills and introducing and encouraging them to enroll at YMS. This finding adds to the existing literature, as the current study suggests that students who have access to school music programs can learn skills needed for more advanced music programs.

While most students presented unawareness of YMS and its expectations, all students in the current study expected musical growth before attending the program, which is congruent with Baranski's findings (2011). His study analyzed students' perspectives on their motivation prior to enrollment at a community music program. The findings of his study suggest that students enrolled at the program because they were intrinsically motivated to perform music, and either because they wanted to experience music at a level that complements instruction at their current school or because they do not have music offerings at their school setting. Likewise, in the current study, students reported that starting private lessons and learning new music were important reasons to join YMS.

Unlike the current study, Doyle (2012) found that teachers in lower SES areas tend to have lower expectations and less positive attitudes towards their music students. Doyle's

findings contrast the perspectives of students in the current study, since the latter reported high teacher expectations of musical accomplishment, in addition to expressing positive attitudes toward starting private lessons and learning new music before attending YMS. Most prior research studies present teachers' expectations of music programs, omitting students' expectations (e.g., Doyle, 2012; and Clements, 2006.). The findings of the current research augment the existing literature with students' perspectives, specifically their motivations and expectations when attending a new music program.

In addition to musical motivations, students in the current study reported different social motivations before attending YMS, which is a similar finding to Baranski's study (2011). His study suggests that students enrolled at a community program "to receive the social rewards and benefits associated with learning and creating in a supportive environment" (p. 254). Likewise, students in the current study expressed interest in joining YMS in order to participate in musical activities with their friends who were already in the program.

In addition to friendship influences, Ebie's (1998) research supports the sense of proudness and accomplishment that students in the current study expressed. The participants in his study and the participants in the current study shared some commonalities since both studies were part of Title-I school communities. Ebie's findings (1998) suggest that students felt a sense of leadership and accepted a great deal of responsibility when they participated in music ensembles. Similarly, students in the current study felt a sense of proudness at Central Strings for being invited to participate at YMS with a scholarship. Ebie (1998) also suggests that students participating in music programs had feelings of personal accomplishment, which is congruent with students in the current study who described confidence in their violin skills prior to attending YMS.

Research Question 2: What do participants with backgrounds in a Title-I school consider to be the benefits of advanced violin studies?

Four main themes reflected the benefits of advanced violin studies at YMS to students with backgrounds at Central Strings, located at a Title-I elementary school: 1) Students improved their musical skills at YMS. They learned proper technique, music notation and more advanced songs, enjoyed private instruction and performance opportunities, and perceived opportunities to learn different instruments at YMS. 2) Students were able to see music as a positive part in their futures. They imagined themselves as music teachers, performers, and appreciators, perceived music as a way to bring financial stability to their futures, and strived to be like their music role models. 3) Students described being able to succeed in other subjects with the advancement of their music learning. This included playing the piano by ear, dancing, painting, and increased concentration in other school-related tasks. 4) Students showed positive socio-emotional connections with music learning. They were able to meet more musicians and socialize with different groups of students.

Regarding the first theme, the majority of students in the current study experienced advancements in their technique, improved their music literacy, and demonstrated enjoyment in private lessons and performances, all of which are congruent with Gillespie et al.'s (2014) findings. Results of their study suggested that string programs increased students' understanding of the music literacy and their musical expressiveness.

In the second theme, the majority of students in the current student saw music as a positive trait in the future, which aligns with findings from Kelly-McHale's (2013) study of students from a low SES backgrounds. Her findings suggest that students develop their own identity in music (IIM) and music in identity (MII) when participating in a general music class.

In her study, students' IIM was defined as musicians, or "someone who could read, write, and perform music" (p. 207), which shares similarities to the way students in the current study defined themselves. Kelly-McHale defines MII as how music is used as an expression tool and as a way to develop individuals' personalities. In her study, the majority of students enjoyed listening to music and singing and dancing to it, but they did not envision themselves as professional musicians. In the current study, however, most of the students defined their MII as how they can develop their musical skills and themselves into becoming professional musicians.

Shields' findings (2001), in which students and parents reported that music was "basic to life" (p. 281), served as a vehicle for self-expression, and encouraged positive change, motivation, and enjoyment, are also congruent with findings from the current study. In the current study, students articulated enjoyment for playing in the concerts of both programs, explaining that they served as ways of expressing themselves and demonstrating their musical improvement. In addition, students presented a deep appreciation for music, reported that music is a big part of their lives, and explained that they do not have plans to stop playing the violin until they are elders.

In the third theme, students stated that music instruction helped students succeed in other subjects, which aligns with Gillespie et al.'s (2014) results. Their study suggested that string programs increase opportunities for students to experience arts in general, since it also encourages student collaborations with other music and arts educators. Although it is difficult to substantiate that music advancements and successes transfer to other academic subjects, students in the current study perceived extra-musical benefits to their participation. This finding does not suggest that music education necessarily facilitate cognitive transfers; however in the current

study, students perceived that violin instruction impacted other arts participation by enabling them to paint musical notes, learn the piano by ear, and dance to a violin beat.

Gillespie et al.'s results (2014) also suggest that string programs provide an increased opportunity to relax and relieve personal stress as well as to develop personal time management. Additionally, Ebie's findings (1998) suggest that music ensembles provide students with feelings of personal accomplishment, which may carry over into other subjects. Similarly to those studies, students in the current study said that they apply music practices to other tasks, making them more efficient when studying for other subjects. Additionally, two students reported listening to music for relaxation.

In the fourth and last theme for the second research question, students presented positive socio-emotional connections with music learning, which showed similarities with studies by Ebie (1998), Langston and Barrett (2008), and Oare (2008). Ebie (1998) noticed an increase of teamwork and group dynamics when observing students from low SES backgrounds in a music program. His findings suggested that music instruction provides emotional qualities that are different than other subjects in school, and encourages students to:

> Get to know people a little bit deeper, and the gates are opened so that [students] can see what this person is about. . . . They learn a little more, not just about music, but other aspects of life besides that. (p. 72)

Langston and Barrett's findings (2008) indicated that members of a community choir had strong networks with other members, shared norms and values, increased their willingness to trust each other and their involvement in civic and community activities, and presented a strong sense of caring for and valuing others. Similarly, Oare (2008) noticed that students tended to arrive early to music classes in order to talk and socialize, which created a community of learners and

developed a sense of self-confidence, trust, and understanding. In the current study, students mentioned that they have chances to meet other musicians, socializing before and after classes and performances. They said that all students of Central Elementary watch Central Strings concerts, giving musicians a sense of self-confidence. After concerts at Central Strings, students expressed enjoyment in listening to their peers perform and in observing other students improving; in some cases, they reported appreciating additional social activities, such as going out to eat at a restaurant in town and having a chance to socialize with their colleagues. At YMS, students mentioned concerts where the program provides food as a reward for their hard work during the semester, which is also a social activity that they enjoyed.

Research question 3: What do students perceive as key differences between their initial elementary school violin study and their current instruction at a tuition-based advanced music academy?

There were three main themes that described the students' perceptions of differences between Central Strings and YMS. Students reported that both programs have structural and music teaching differences, noticeable differences between the communities of students, and evoked different emotional reactions in the programs. My review of literature did not reveal any extant literature supporting the first theme found in the current study.

Regarding differences between the communities of students, students in the current study reported that there are fewer behavior issues at YMS, which is similar to Doyle's (2012) and Shield's (2001) results. In Doyle's study (2012), music teachers in urban schools expressed difficulties in classroom management and discipline, in addition to a lack of consistency with student discipline (p. 42). Similarly, Shields's (2001) results reported that "at-risk" and urban music students felt that their worst problems at school were trouble with peers and their own

behaviors (p. 280). The main characteristics of urban schools that allows the comparison to Central Elementary is the lower SES levels and Title-I status. Students of the current study reported that they experienced fewer class interruptions and fewer complaints from students during classes at YMS than at Central Strings.

The last theme of the last research question found differences in students' emotional reactions to both programs, which is congruent with Clements' (2006) findings. Her study suggests successful factors for a community music program, which emphasizes the importance of parental support. According to Clements:

> [Community programs] rely heavily on an unwavering commitment from the parents in all aspects of the program. . . . Not only must children be driven to a weekly lesson, group classes and orchestra rehearsals, parents have to help carry delicate instruments back and forth, attend parent meetings and concerts. (p. 59)

In the current study, all students reported that YMS requires more commitment and effort than Central Strings. Because the program is located away from their home school, students reported that they need parental support to commute to YMS classes at least twice a week.

Limitations of the Current Study

The nature of a qualitative study is not to generalize data, but to find the relevance of the experiences of participants, and to bring those forward for further awareness, questions, and considerations for the field. As such, the findings of the current study only reflect the perceptions of a small population of five students and should not be generalized. There were also a number of limitations that should be taken into consideration. When recruiting students to participate in the current study, the directors of YMS disclosed that only a few students have scholarship opportunities, which are distributed based primarily on merit and willingness to attend all classes

and concerts provided by the program. The five participants of the study have backgrounds at Central Strings and are scholarship recipients at YMS. Two other students were also recruited to the study because they attended Central Strings for a short period of time. However, they do not receive a scholarship to attend YMS, and they did not sign consent and assent forms to participate in the study. The remaining scholarship recipients at YMS have been in the program for many years and are in advanced levels, and the majority of them have parents who work at Midwest University.

Besides the limited number of participants that fit the criteria for the study, the participants involved were mostly females in grades four to six at Central Elementary. The only male participant was also the only student currently in middle school. Although I was able to receive consent for all five students and parents to participate in the study, only four parents were able to complete the interview. Some of the student participants are also my own students either at YMS or at Central Strings, and in some cases, both places. Although prior to interviews students were told that this study is focused on their own perspectives, there would be no consequences for anything that they say, and they were encouraged to talk freely, because of the hierarchy of student and teacher positions, student participants may not have been completely honest with their answers.

The five student participants have been in the program from two to four years and have been playing the violin for three to five years. Because they have not been playing for longer, their experiences past beginning level are limited, and because of their young ages, it is difficult to make assumptions about their musical futures. Although the majority of the student participants reported that they wanted to continue their violin and music studies and perhaps use

it as their future profession, they might not have a clear sense of the long-term impact of music instruction, or they might perceive benefits of music that could change as they get older.

In addition, students that are not scholarship recipients at YMS, students that did not participate at Central Strings, and Central Elementary students that participate in other music programs or take lessons outside of YMS were excluded from the sample of the current study. Interviewing other students might have revealed contrasting perspectives on music learning. For instance, findings regarding the benefits of violin learning could look different from the perspective of a student who does not receive a scholarship at YMS or from one who is mostly encouraged to participate in music by their parents.

It is also important to notice that student participants receive formal music training that mostly uses method books with traditional Western classical music repertoire. The results of the current study suggest that students enjoyed the repertoire used at YMS; however, it is difficult to predict their perceptions and reactions if the classes incorporated different musical genres, such as pop music, jazz, and others.

Implications for Teaching Practice

The current study may suggest teaching and administrative strategies for music programs located in Title-I schools or involving lower SES students, as well as for tuition-based programs or those comprised mainly of students with higher SES. All student participants expressed that the beginning levels of their violin instruction at Central Strings used very few songs and repetition served as the main teaching strategy. Students reported that they felt bored and tired, and some even considered quitting in third grade after violin was not a requirement. Although this finding may be a reflection of the age and developmental stage of the student participants, these findings may suggest that, in the beginning levels, using varied repetitions might keep

students engaged with music and discourage them from leaving the program. As the use of repetition is essential for learning in the beginning levels of violin instruction, it is suggested that teachers support students' tolerance for helpful repetition by fostering their engagement in the lesson. For instance, teachers can use repetitions applied to other music genres outside of Western classical music, such as with a Hip Hop beat track, or a Latin beat. Although students did not express concern about the type of repertoire chosen in the programs, their frustrations regarding the limited number of songs played suggest that teachers of beginning instrumental music students might also consider using a more varied repertoire.

All student participants also reported that many of their friends at Central Strings chose another activity to attend, instead of continuing with violin. For instance, Nick responded:

> I did show choir and violin through all my Central Elementary years. So [other students] can't pick like show choir and pottery, they have to pick violin. I feel like that's not really that fair. I wanted to do other stuff besides violin but I couldn't because I wouldn't be able to be on the strings program anymore.

Although it is difficult to change school schedules, as Gillespie et al. (2014) reported, music instruction often relies on other facilities, such as space, instruments, and technology use, the current study may suggest that students would benefit from having more opportunities to experience other activities together with music. For instance, if the demand of elementary school students interested in learning music is high enough, teachers might be able to advocate for alternative after-school and in-school times for violin instruction. Therefore, students, especially those in Title-I schools who tend to see school activities as the primary option, would not need to commute to the university for classes, or depend on resources provided by their families to attend music programs.

Regarding YMS, all student participants reported that they have less time for socializing and fewer friendships than at Central Strings. Although students did not articulate concerns regarding friendships at YMS, the lack of socialization could bring discouragement for students and a lack of friendship support for learning music. As reported in the beginning of the chapter, current literature emphasizes the importance of social activities for music programs, where students benefit from extra-musical effects (Ebie, 1998; Langston, 2008; Oare, 2008). In addition to limited social support, student participants also reported that the majority of the students in YMS classes are younger than them. The findings of the current study may suggest that there could be more opportunities for social activities across YMS. For instance, the program could organize field trips for students at YMS to watch concerts at Midwest University as a class. In addition, YMS might experiment with placing students in group classes according to their age, and teachers may also consider increasing opportunities for building optional chamber groups. Doing so would provide students opportunities to develop closer connections with students from other schools.

Student participants also demonstrated interest in integrating their Western classical music knowledge with other forms of arts, such as dance, painting, playing the piano by ear, and even free-styling. Those findings suggest that YMS could provide more opportunities for students to experience other genres of music and interdisciplinary arts practices, including those matched with their own musical interests. Perhaps a more cross-cultural, cross-artistic approach to learning the violin, and the inclusion of culturally responsive pedagogy (e.g., Boon, 2014; Kelly-McHale, 2013; Shaw, 2015) could be helpful strategies to include at YMS. That way, students can integrate their own artistic interests in violin playing, such as combining hip-hop with violin playing. Since YMS is part of a major music university, it may also be suggested that

leaders invite guest musicians who explore other musical genres or arts practices to conduct workshops at the program.

The findings of the current study also suggest that students and parents faced difficulties in attending the program, including the increased time, commitment, and cost for coming to YMS two to four times a week. Programs such as YMS might consider bringing their music teachers to teach private lessons at Title-I schools, so students unable to commute to the program still get opportunities to learn music and benefit from it. Regarding financial difficulties, there are only a few students at YMS who receive scholarship, come from Title-I school backgrounds, and are able to come to YMS and attend all classes offered at the program. However, there are more students at YMS whose parents work for Midwestern University, and who might not come from lower SES backgrounds, but are also receiving scholarships based on their merit. The current method for scholarship distribution at YMS may bring consequences of inequity between students from lower and higher SES schools, especially because students from Title-I backgrounds may not be able to commute to advanced programs like YMS. Like other music community projects, such as the Metropolitan Community Orchestra (Clements, 2006), YMS could offer sliding scale fees, varying the price of tuition based on parents' ability to pay.

Implications for Further Research

Since this study is unique in its focus on students' and parents' perspectives on two string programs with contrasting SES levels, many of the themes developed in the current study were not found anywhere in the existing literature. The literature explored in Chapter 2 did not present articles supporting students' perspectives regarding scholarship distribution in tuition-based programs nor their perceptions of structures, music teaching approaches, communities of students, and emotional reactions in different music programs, all of which were themes found in

the current study. Those findings suggest that there might be gaps in existing literature. Replications of the current study, and further qualitative and quantitative research exploring those specific themes, could allow music educators to have a deeper understanding of differences between low and high SES programs.

The findings of the current research also generate further questions regarding the benefits of enrollment in music education programs, as well as differences between low and high SES programs. Title-I students in the current study experienced more pressure to succeed when placed in higher SES music programs. They reported feeling nervous in classes and concerts as well as intimidated by the size of buildings and number of people when they come to YMS. Qualitative researchers might further explore this unique finding because it may assist music educators in better understanding students' learning experiences when they attend programs with peers from different SES households. Additionally, the current study explored students' perceptions of different pedagogies, which might suggest music educators to expand research regarding different teaching strategies in programs with students from contrasting SES areas. For instance, student participants reported that the use of repetitions at Central Strings was discouraging for their peers and themselves. Future research might explore students' reactions to different teaching strategies, including how they might impact their interest in music. It might also be beneficial to examine whether programs that adopt other pedagogies, such as informal learning, problem-based learning, interdisciplinary projects, composition, and improvisation, might attract and retain more students in music classes.

Additionally, replications of the current study in music programs located in different cities or states might allow researchers to understand further perspectives of students with different cultural backgrounds and habits from this study's participants. Replications of this

study with students from similar SES areas, but with different ages, ethnicities, or enrolled in music programs that explore other genres of music, would allow music educators to explore different results and have further implications for future research and teaching practice. Interviewing a variety of students that attended music programs with different backgrounds (such as tuition-based programs versus Title-I programs), including those who are not scholarship recipients, those who only participate in Title-I music programs or only in tuition-based programs, and those who are in music programs for longer periods of time, would also allow researchers to have a more holistic perspective regarding differences between such music programs. In order to better understand any potential intersections between gender and students' perceptions, it would also be constructive to replicate the study with more male participants. The current study could be replicated later with the same student participants in order to explore whether or not their perceptions changed.

The current study may also be modified to also explore teachers' perspectives. For instance, researchers can conduct interviews with teachers of community music programs to explore the challenges of including students of Title-I backgrounds in tuition-based music programs. Researchers might also interview teachers to explore possible responses to the current findings, such as Title-I students having fewer friendships when placed in tuition-based advanced programs.

The current study could also be adapted to use different methodologies. For instance, longitudinal studies might allow researchers to determine variable patterns over a greater amount of time and analyze the developmental trends of music programs with different SES characteristics. Such generalized results would aid music educators in understanding certain trends regarding students' reactions to different music programs. Quantitative studies can also

determine and compare the characteristics, strategies, and effectiveness of music instruction in locations with different levels of SES.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of music students who come from a Title-I background and are currently participating in a tuition-based advanced music program. Five students and four of their parents were interviewed, and their responses explained why students decided to pursue advanced violin learning in a tuition-based program, what the benefits of music instruction are, and what the differences between music programs of contrasting SES are. The results suggest that students received social and financial support before attending YMS, perceived music as their future profession and as an activity that positively impacts their knowledge and social relationships, and recognized structural, pedagogical, social, and psychological differences between the two programs. Many of the themes developed in the current research were not found anywhere in the existing literature, including students' perspectives regarding scholarship distribution in tuition-based programs, and their perceived differences of music programs with contrasting SES characteristics.

It is important for music educators to keep dialoguing with music students, so that their perceptions can be heard. Then, the music education field can analyze the unique benefits it brings for students, and encourage the creation and improvement of programs that serve a wide range of students. Results of the current study suggest that formal music instruction and the use of traditional Western classical repertoire could be more flexible than what one might assume, enabling students with Title-I backgrounds to have a deep engagement with music-related activities and encouraging music to be a major influence on their lives.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Students – Set 1

Part I: Greetings and introduction

Introduce purpose of the study: "The goal of this study is to analyze the benefits of instrumental music education for students that came from Central Strings and are now in the Youth Midwest Strings. For this to happen, do your best to answer all the questions with all your insights. This is a non-judgmental environment and there are no right or wrong answers."

Reminder of confidentiality of information: "The information I am about to collect is confidential and the purpose of this interview is strictly for this study's use. You can stop answering questions at any time if you feel uncomfortable with responses."

Part II: Students' demographics/Backgrounds

1. How old are you?
2. What grade are you? Are you still a student at Central Elementary?
3. How long have you been in the Youth Midwest Strings?
4. What kind of music did you have as a child (Playing, performing, singing, etc.? At home and at school)?
5. What are some feelings you have when performing or practicing violin? (How did you feel at a concert, recital, lesson, practicing at home, etc.?)

Part III: Central Elementary Experiences

1. When did you start learning the violin at the Central Strings?
2. How would you describe Central Strings to someone from a different school?
3. When you started, did you enjoy it? Do you think your classmates liked or disliked the project more than you?

4. Describe me how you feel about Central Strings now/when you were close to finishing elementary school. Did it change?
5. Tell me about your favorite parts of Central Strings.
6. Tell me about your least favorite parts of Central Strings.
7. Do you think Central Strings helped you to be part of the YMS? How?
8. Did you make music outside of Central Strings? Church, performing for parents, etc.?
9. Describe me how you feel during Central Strings classes.
10. Describe me how you felt during concerts at Central Strings.

Part IV: Youth Midwest Strings Experiences

1. Why did you decide to enroll at the YMS? Or how did you feel when you were invited to be at YMS?
2. Why do you think you were invited to YMS?
3. How did your parents react when you were invited to be at YMS?
4. How would you describe YMS to someone from your school or other school who doesn't participate?
5. Would you encourage other people from your school to join YMS? Why or why not?
6. When you first arrived at YMS, what surprised you?
7. How was YMS different from Central Strings?
8. How is YMS similar from Central Strings?
9. Tell me about your favorite parts of YMS.
10. Tell me about your least favorite parts of YMS.
11. Describe me how you feel during YMS classes.
12. Describe me how you felt during concerts at YMS.

Part V: Motivation

1. Tell me about your experiences with the violin. Have you always liked it? Do you still like it? What inspires you most?
2. Do you participate in your school orchestra or do musical activities in school? Tell me about your musical participation in school.
3. What do you want to do for a job as an adult? Did this idea change from when you started the violin?
4. How long do you intend to keep playing the violin? Why do you want to keep playing the violin? Or, give me some reasons why you would quit playing the violin.
5. Do you feel playing the violin has helped other aspects of your life?

Interview Questions for Students – Set 2

Recapitulation

1. Give me a brief overview of your semester with the violin. Did you make advancements?
2. What has been your favorite part of your violin studies this semester?
3. What are you most excited for in the future with violin?

Confirmation

1. Last time we met, you mentioned that your favorite parts of YMS were ___. Is that still correct?
2. Let's think back about Central Strings. You said that your favorite parts of Central Strings were ___. Is that still correct? Can you comment on the significances of that?
3. Other questions to confirm previous data.

Further connections

1. Do you have other friends who play an instrument outside Central Strings or YMS? Do you find they make music or think about music differently than you? Why or why not?
2. Do you have friends that play violin at Central Strings and are not part of YMS? Do you find they make music or think about music differently than you? Why or why not?
3. How do you see music helping you in your future?

Interview Questions for Parents

1. What were your feelings when your child received an invitation to be at YMS with a scholarship?
2. What impact have you observed this program having for the students involved?
3. What challenges have you experienced or observed to attend the YMS?
4. Your child said ____ in our interview. Do you agree/disagree? Why? (Other confirmation questions).
5. Do you notice differences between your child and other students at YMS? Why or why not?
6. Have you noticed a shift in your child's musical progresses as a result of this program?
7. How is your child's musical interactions with students outside the YMS?